

House Oversight and Reform Committee

Member Fact Sheets

116th Congress

Not for Public Distribution

Rep. Justin Amash (R-Mich.)

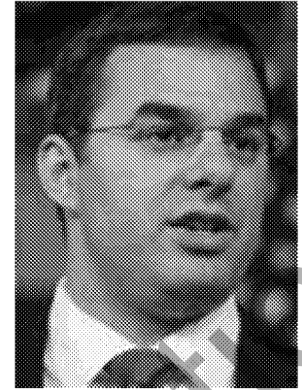
3rd District, West central -- Grand Rapids, Battle Creek

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

The libertarian Amash is a member of the Republican Conference, but looks forward to Americans ultimately abandoning both major political parties.

“We need to make sure that the next generation is thinking about this, and hopefully, over time, these two parties start to fall apart,” he said in an interview with Reason magazine in July 2017. “They’re getting smaller each year, which is why, I think, the partisan rhetoric is getting elevated, because they’re actually smaller and smaller each year, and they’re becoming more extreme.”



Amash (ah-MAHSH) contends that House members would vote for libertarian bills if GOP leaders would open up the legislative process and allow ideas to be more freely debated.

He said in the Reason interview that “a lot of the inability to move forward on more libertarian ideas is because we have this two-party system that really controls all of the levers. And you have Republican leadership that basically decides all of the outcomes in advance, and doesn’t allow issues to be debated on the floor.”

He added that under a Democratic majority, libertarian ideas wouldn’t get a chance to be debated either.

Amash keeps up a flow of commentary on his Twitter account, explaining in July 2017, for example, how House leaders wouldn’t allow a floor debate on his amendment to ban the sale of cluster munitions to Saudi Arabia. He said Saudi Arabia “is among the world’s worst violators of human rights” and that President Trump “must stand up to them, not sell them weapons.”

He explained on Twitter that “typically, only two types of amendments get a floor vote,” those “that do nothing” or those “that do something but have no chance of passing.”

Despite his frequent friction with GOP leaders, Amash did vote for their bill to replace parts of the Democrats’ 2010 health insurance overhaul.

He explained on his Facebook account that he asked himself whether the bill “improves upon existing law, not whether I would advocate for the policy or program if I were starting with a blank slate.... In this case, I felt comfortable advancing the bill to the Senate as a marginal improvement” to the 2010 law.

But he criticized the bill, saying. “At best, it will make Obamacare less bad.”

Given his limited-government philosophy, it’s not surprising that Amash sees federal overreach as the root problem.

“As long as Washington dictates health insurance policy to the entire country, there will be massive tension and displeasure with the system,” he explained. “I’ve always said, and I will continue to say, we need to start over: Fully repeal Obamacare, let the people of each state choose their own approach, and work together in a nonpartisan manner.”

In 2017, Amash was one of only seven Republicans to vote against a bill to cut off some federal funds from cities that don’t cooperate with federal immigration enforcement. The bill also would prohibit state and local government officials from barring police or sheriffs from cooperating with federal enforcement of immigration laws.

Amash said the bill would violate the Tenth Amendment by enabling the federal government “to coerce states” into helping enforce immigration laws. “In Congress, the laws we make are to be executed by federal officials; we may not commandeer nonfederal officials.”

In the 2016 Republican presidential primaries, Amash at first endorsed libertarian-minded Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul. After Paul dropped out of the race, he backed Texas Sen. Ted Cruz.

He told Reason TV in March 2016 that Donald Trump’s “authoritarian” tendencies were a threat to freedom and that “he could push us in a very dangerous direction.”

“Trump presents a kind of threat to our system that is maybe in some ways bigger than what the Democrats present because he is attacking from the right, or what’s perceived as the right,” he said.

But Amash applauded Trump’s choice of Betsy DeVos to be the secretary of education, noting that she was a friend of his, a resident of his district, and a person who is “passionate about reforming education.”

He said he would work with her to advance school choice, protect the rights of homeschoolers, and stop federal initiatives such as the Obama administration’s \$4.3 billion competitive grant program called Race to the Top.

Amash has voted against defense policy bills every year he’s served in Congress. He has worried that they would allow the president to hold U.S. citizens without trial if they are suspected of associating with terrorists.

He and Washington Democrat Adam Smith tried to amend a 2012 bill with the goal of eliminating the military’s authority to indefinitely detain individuals suspected of being terrorists, if they are caught within the United States. That effort prompted Florida Republican Tom Rooney, a former military prosecutor, to accuse Amash of wanting to “coddle foreign enemy combatants.”

Amash’s devotion to his principles has not always sat well with other Republicans. Not long after the 2012 election, the GOP Steering Committee voted to remove Amash from the Budget Committee, while also punishing three other lawmakers in a similar fashion.

At the start of the 113th Congress (2013-14), his only committee assignment was to the Oversight and Government Reform panel. He was still serving on that committee in the 115th Congress.

When it came time to elect the speaker of the House for the 113th Congress, Amash participated in a failed campaign to deny John A. Boehner a second term. He voted for Rep. Raúl R. Labrador of Idaho. At the start of the 114th Congress, he voted for Republican Study Committee Chairman Jim Jordan, R-Ohio.

He voted for Paul D. Ryan to be speaker after Boehner retired in October 2015 and again backed Ryan at the start of the 115th Congress in January 2017.

Amash’s father, a former refugee, emigrated from Palestine as a teenager and went on to found a tool company; his mother came from Syria. Amash is Eastern Orthodox. He was born in Grand Rapids, a Republican bastion for decades; his district’s borders have moved somewhat over the years, but it is essentially the same one that Gerald R. Ford once represented.

Amash got economics and law degrees at the University of Michigan. He worked as a business lawyer for several years, as well as having a position in his father’s tool company.

He was elected to the state House in 2008 and launched his run for Congress in February 2010. Incumbent Republican Vernon J. Ehlers announced the next day that he would retire. Amash beat four other candidates in the primary and defeated Democrat Pat Miles in November with almost 60 percent of the vote.

Redistricting for the 2012 election made his seat tougher to defend, but Amash beat Democrat Steve Pestka by more than 8 points. In 2014 and in 2016, he won by even wider margins.

Rep. Kelly Armstrong (R-N.D.)

At Large, North Dakota -- At Large

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

A state senator prior to his election to Congress, Armstrong looks to further a small government approach to fostering the state's essential economic pillars — energy and agriculture.



He replaces third-term Republican Kevin Cramer, who ran for the Senate, in filling North Dakota's at-large seat in the House.

"The industries that are important in North Dakota are important to the world — food and energy are always the two biggest industries we deal with here," he told the Grand Forks Herald.

Armstrong knows the state's energy industry firsthand. In 2011, he joined his family's oil and gas business, the Armstrong Corporation. Armstrong's father, Mike, runs the company and the younger Armstrong is vice president. He, personally, owns more than 300 oil wells.

He wants Washington to reduce regulation on North Dakota's energy producers. "We're better at regulating North Dakota industry in North Dakota than the federal government ever will be," he told the Bismarck Tribune. "When we deal with the politics of regulation in North Dakota, they're North Dakota politics, they're not national politics."

Armstrong has a favorable opinion of the Trump administration's recent work with Congress, praising Trump's deregulatory approach and the 2017 tax cut.

At the same time, Armstrong is critical of the budget and appropriations process in the Capitol and comes to Congress looking to change it. "We have to get rid of governing by crisis down there," he said. "Budgets get passed out of the House. They go to the Senate. They don't get passed out of the Senate, then we end up with these omnibus packages that you're forced to vote for."

He cites his religious heritage in explaining his opposition to abortion.

Owing to the difficulty of running a statewide election in North Dakota, Armstrong relied on the North Dakota GOP, which he chaired prior to his 2018 congressional bid. "We have 47 districts all across the state," he said. "These are going to be the most expensive federal races in the history of North Dakota, so any time you can use your grassroots volunteers and people who really care about the direction of the state and the direction of the party, we're going to utilize them as much as humanly possible."

Armstrong won the party's nod at an April convention on the first ballot, then bested fellow state Sen. Tom Campbell by a two-to-one margin in the June primary.

He defeated Democrat Mac Schneider, a former minority leader in the state Senate on Election Day.

Schneider tried to appeal to the state's farmers by raising Trump's imposition of tariffs on American trading partners, which has prompted retaliatory duties on U.S. food producers.

Armstrong said he didn't endorse the president's policy but wanted to give Trump a chance to renegotiate trade deals.

Before joining his father's company, Armstrong worked as a partner in a law firm he founded, Reichert Armstrong, which handles criminal defense, divorce and family law and personal injury suits.

He earned his bachelor's degree at the University of North Dakota in 2001, then left for law school at the College of William and Mary in Virginia before returning to finish his law degree at his alma mater in 2002.

There he met his future wife, Kjersti, who was on an exchange program from her native Norway.

Armstrong said he supported legal immigration but also Trump's crackdown on the southern border. He suggested that North Dakota companies could help with construction of a border wall.

Armstrong won election to the state Senate in 2012, re-election four years later, and has chaired the Judiciary Committee and served on the Energy and Natural Resources panel. He won the chairmanship of the state Republican Party in a 2015 election.

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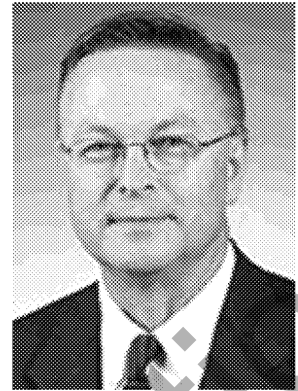
Rep. Rod Blum (R-Iowa)

1st District, Northeast -- Cedar Rapids, Waterloo, Dubuque

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

Blum survived a tight race to win his second term in the House without sacrificing his conservative policy priorities and Freedom Caucus affiliation in a district that twice elected Barack Obama. But he can look forward to a similarly difficult re-election campaign in 2018, as Democrats have already identified him a top target to defeat.



The Iowa software business owner cultivates his reputation as a political outsider, and has spent much of his time in office trying to rein in Congress and federal authority. One of his first pieces of legislation was a bipartisan effort with Rep. Gwen Graham, D-Fla., to curb travel benefits, such as some first-class flights, for their fellow lawmakers. The bill offered Blum an opportunity to tout his work with Democrats while trying to slash government spending.

“This is not a partisan issue: members of Congress don’t need taxpayer-funded perks like first-class travel and long-term car leases to do their job,” he said of the measure. “America’s founders never intended for public servants to live a life of luxury paid for by everyday Americans.”

He also teamed up with another Democrat, Rep. Beto O’Rourke of Texas, to form a Congressional Term Limits Caucus, which favors enacting term limit legislation for members of Congress.

“The root of this problem is that politicians are incentivized by the system to care more about retaining their position than doing what is best for the country,” Blum said. “Our founding fathers never intended for public service to be a career; rather, serving in Congress was designed to be a temporary sacrifice made for the public good.”

Blum’s assignments on the House Small Business and Oversight and Government Reform committees, and his first-term assignment on the Budget committee, give him an opportunity to put his thrifty principles to use. Limited government, the virtues of self-reliance and personal responsibility, and his “Penny Plan” for a balanced federal budget are at the center of Blum’s vision.

His plan to reduce federal spending by one percent each year for six years is the Iowan’s favored way of achieving a balanced budget. And he says that after successive cuts get it there, the budget should stay balanced by way of a constitutional amendment. Whether the cuts are across the board or from specific programs is up for debate, and Blum says he’s willing to tackle that with anyone, regardless of party.

He voted against the \$1.1 trillion omnibus appropriations bill in December 2015, calling it a “backroom spending deal that leaves our children and grandchildren with the bill.” Along with a group of freshmen GOP lawmakers, he sent a letter to the Republican presidential candidates in February 2016 asking them to commit to supporting a balanced budget amendment.

Blum has also worked on projects for his district. He joined with two other Iowans, Reps. Dave Loebsack and David Young, to add an amendment to a water bill to expedite flood prevention efforts for the Cedar River in his state. The amendment made it into the text of the final Senate bill that President Obama signed into law in December 2016.

Blum has not been afraid to break from his party – his first vote in Congress was against electing Rep. John Boehner Speaker of the House. Instead of Boehner, Blum backed Florida Rep. Daniel Webster.

He was skeptical of Republican leaders who planned to repeal the Affordable Care Act in 2015 through reconciliation, when President Obama was in office. “What’s the point?” Blum said. “He’s going to obviously not sign it. So are we making a statement that we’re against Obamacare? I think America knows that. I mean, I ran on that in my district.”

The way Republicans in the House voted to repeal and replace the 2010 healthcare law in 2017 was also flawed, he told constituents at a town hall meeting. “I have always said the process was bad, that it was rushed, it was rushed and there should’ve been hearings.”

Blum held out on supporting the first draft of the House GOP’s replacement bill, announcing with other Freedom Caucus members he would vote ‘no’. When the House took a vote in May on a revised version, he voted for the legislation.

“I withheld my support – against the wishes of my own party – until changes were made to ensure that premiums would come down and that we would take care of those who need help by setting aside over \$120 billion to assist citizens with pre-existing conditions,” Blum said in a statement.

Blum has a libertarian streak that includes opposition to the National Security Agency’s data collection activities. He takes a socially conservative stance on abortion rights and calls himself “100 percent pro-life from conception to the cradle to the grave.”

In 2014 Blum faced off against Pat Murphy in a tight race to fill a seat vacated by Rep. Bruce Braley, a Democrat who went on to lose his Senate bid to Republican Joni Ernst. Blum won the seat with 51 percent of the vote, a roughly 6,600-vote margin.

His relationship with the party’s campaign wing quickly soured after his vote against Boehner’s speakership. “I’ve always believed that when one door closes another one opens,” Blum said in 2015. “There’s been other groups out there that are interested in a career businessman who represents a Democrat district who won and who’s principled and they’re very interested in what I’ve done so far.” He made more headway in 2016 with Speaker Paul D. Ryan, who campaigned with him.

Blum outspent all of his House colleagues running for re-election in 2016 on franked mail. “What they do is let the voters in my district — there are 20 counties, a lot of them are very rural — let them know what we’re doing,” Blum told local ABC affiliate KCRG.

He faced Democrat Monica Vernon as one of the most vulnerable Republicans up for re-election and won by 7 points. He is already in the GOP’s “Patriot Program” for 2018, which gives his campaign extra support. Roll Call rates the race “Leans Republican.”

Blum hails from humble roots. According to his campaign website, his father quit high school in the 10th grade and enlisted in the Navy during World War II, while his mother cleaned houses.

“Starting with nothing, I worked my butt off to put myself through college,” Blum wrote on his campaign website. “I entered the software industry on the ground floor to achieve my version of the American Dream.” He made Roll Call’s 2015 list of the 50 richest members of Congress.

Blum notes that he also is a real estate developer and high school basketball coach. His coaching led him to take on a surrogate son, Malcolm Stewart, an orphan. Blum and his wife, Karen, have five other children.

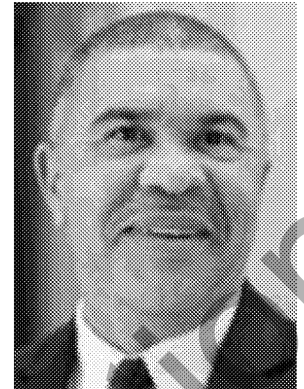
Rep. William Lacy Clay (D-Mo.)

1st District, St. Louis; eastern St. Louis County

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

Policy-wise, Clay has focused heavily on his work on the Financial Services committee in recent years and is the top Democrat on two subcommittees: Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit, as well as the newly created Monetary Policy and Trade subcommittee.



But the specter of conflict between local police and black citizens has been a central political focus for the nine-term congressman after protests in his hometown of Ferguson, Mo., sparked a national conversation about policing and race relations.

An incumbent who regularly nabs more than 70 percent of the vote in general elections, Clay was thrown into the spotlight after Ferguson protests in 2014 left shops demolished and hundreds arrested.

"This is my hometown. So it hurts my heart to see the destruction. To see what we -- we have really turned into," Clay said at the time, who continues to weigh in on issues of race relations and policing as clashes continue nationwide. Recently, he publicly excoriated the decision to acquit St. Louis police officer Jason Stockley in the death of Anthony Lamar Smith, which again brought broken shop windows and clashes with police to his district.

"Once again, another young Black man dies at the hands of a police officer... with no consequences," Clay said in a statement following the acquittal.

Clay's critics have accused him of riding the coattails of his famous father: William L. Clay, an African-American political pioneer who served in the House for 32 years. When Clay struggled in college, his father's connections helped him land a job in the House documents room. Later, the younger Clay tapped his dad's powerful political network in St. Louis to help secure seats in the state House and Senate, and ultimately to succeed his father in Congress.

Clay has repeatedly chastised police forces and the Pentagon for the practice of using military-style equipment for local policing saying small police forces aren't properly trained in their use. And he sharply criticized President Donald Trump for rescinding an executive order he worked on with President Barack Obama limiting the flow of military surplus items into local police departments.

He said Trump's move would "allow local police departments to receive grenade launchers, bayonets, tracked armored vehicles, sniper rifles and military grade ammunition; along with other surplus Department of Defense equipment that was intended for use on the battlefield, not in neighborhoods."

Much of Clay's work has been on behalf of his predominately African-American district. He is a member of the Congressional Black Caucus and the Congressional Progressive Caucus, made up of liberal Democrats. Clay frequently chimes in on housing or employment policies that stand to benefit his district, which is the only minority-majority district in the state.

He joined other prominent black politicians in 2012 to protest new voting laws put in place by many Republican state governments - Clay and others said the new standards for registration and identification were designed to suppress voting, targeting minorities.

Clay, who goes by his middle name Lacy, is an avid cook and a golf fanatic, but his mother told a local newspaper that politics "has been his life." He was 12 when his father was elected to Congress, and he spent his teenage years in suburban Maryland, attending high school in Silver Spring and college at the University of Maryland.

He was placed on academic probation in his freshman year, prompting his father to encourage him to find a job. He landed in the House's documents room, where he spent two years before finding work as a House doorman. He took seven years to earn his degree. But it was during that time that Clay says he decided to follow in his father's footsteps.

He was starting law school when an opening in the Missouri House led him back to St. Louis to run in a special election. He spent 17 years in the General Assembly, eight in the House before winning a 1991 special election for a state Senate vacancy. He supplemented his part-time legislator's salary by working in real estate and as a paralegal.

Clay was the presumed heir to the 1st District seat from the moment his father announced his retirement in 1999. He won easily in 2000 with 75 percent of the vote.

While Clay ran unopposed in the 2014 primary, and easily sailed to victory in the general election that year with 73 percent of the vote, his previous election was not a cakewalk.

The race was ugly from the start. After the new map came out, Carnahan approached Clay on the House floor and cursed at him for, in Carnahan's view, not doing enough to protect Carnahan's district. Clay and state Democrats urged Carnahan to run for a suburban seat vacated by Republican Todd Akin, who was running for the Senate.

Clay painted Carnahan as a puppet of Wall Street, citing his vote in 2008 for a \$700 billion rescue package for banks. And Clay consolidated his support in the black community, arguing that keeping an African-American in the seat was crucial to the Missouri Democratic Party's cohesion. If he were to lose to Carnahan, Clay told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, "it would be viewed as setting back the black community, for sure."

Carnahan accused Clay of siding with rent-to-own companies in their bid to escape regulation. He argued that the companies victimized minority communities disproportionately and that customers usually paid more than the original list price of the items they rented, such as televisions and furniture.

In the end, Clay dominated in the city's black wards; Carnahan, who spent a lot more money on the campaign than Clay did, was nearly as strong in the white ones. Neither candidate would say race was a factor.

In 2016, Clay sailed through his re-election with more than 75 percent of the vote.

Rep. Michael Cloud (R-Texas)

27th District, Central and Gulf Coast -- Corpus Christi, Victoria

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

A media consultant with roots in his church and local Republican Party, Cloud describes himself as a constitutional conservative.

He won his seat in a June 30 special election, with less than five months to serve before he is on the ballot for a full term. He replaces Republican Blake Farenthold, who resigned after an Ethics Committee investigation into new sexual harassment claims made against him.

Immigration is a major focus for Cloud, whose wife emigrated from Mexico. He wants a stricter and more efficient immigration system.

"They're coming here for a reason, and they're coming for free goods and services," Cloud said about undocumented immigrants during a May candidate forum. "And too often our illegal aliens get better treatment and better services than some of our veterans do."

Cloud supports building President Donald Trump's wall on the Mexican border, but he released a statement during his campaign opposing the administration's practice of separating undocumented immigrant families.

"We need to defund sanctuary cities, because we cannot expect our citizens to follow the law if we don't expect our elected officials to follow the law," Cloud said during a February debate at the University of Houston-Victoria. He was referring to local governments that have refused to fully cooperate with federal immigration authorities.

"We can do things to streamline the immigration system and to provide a path for citizenship," Cloud said. "And we can work with the federal courts, the immigration courts, so that when someone is detained it doesn't take a couple years and [authorities] lose track of them by the time they come up for a hearing."

He would repeal the 2010 health care law and require health service providers to publish the costs of their services.

"We've had a misplaced goal based on a false assumption and the misplaced goal was to get more people on the health insurance rolls based on the false assumption that health insurance makes health care cheaper," he said during the February debate.

"We need to reintroduce market norms to allow people to buy across state lines. The goal should be to provide access by lowering costs."

He wants to lower costs for the federal government, too, by cutting federal spending. "We are \$21 trillion in debt and the last thing we need is another kick-the-can-down-the-road bureaucrat in Congress," he said during the February debate.

The special election to replace Farenthold came earlier than legally required because Texas officials wanted a member in Congress to represent the district as it recovers from Hurricane Harvey, which hit the Houston area in August 2017.



"The recovery effort for us didn't begin with this campaign, it began in our backyard," Cloud said on the campaign trail in January. "Cooking on a propane stove, cooking food and boiling water for our neighbors, and working in our community there and our communities across this district."

He called for a locally led recovery, with Congress providing block grants. "Loosen up that money and let those decisions be made in Texas," he said during the February debate.

While Cloud had never held elected office before winning his House race, he had been deeply involved in local party functions. He chaired the Victoria County Republican Party for seven years, beginning in 2010. And he joined the State Republican Executive Committee in 2016, working on the party's strategy in Texas.

Cloud studied communications at Oral Roberts University in Oklahoma, where he also ran track and cross country. He worked as the marketing director of his church in Victoria, Texas, and later launched his own media company for web development and video production, which often works on projects for religious organizations.

He launched his campaign for the House in 2017 before Farenthold resigned, intending to challenge the incumbent in the Republican primary. The conservative group Club for Growth backed Cloud's campaign, helping him win the primary for the full term starting in 2019.

Nine candidates representing all parties competed in the special election, which came after the regularly-scheduled primary, and Cloud avoided a runoff, taking almost 55 percent of the vote.

Rep. James R. Comer (R-Ky.)

1st District, West -- Hopkinsville, Henderson, Paducah

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

"I will stand up and fight against Washington, D.C.," Comer declared on his campaign web site.

Comer may want to change how Washington works, but he says he is not intent on practicing scorched-earth politics by blocking bills and scoring political points instead of solving problems.

Although he is a businessman, Comer has worked as a public servant most of his adult life. And while he is a stalwart conservative, he says his record in office has shown he reaches across the aisle to get things done.

"I think that's the problem with a lot of Republicans: they want to vote no on everything," he says. "I want to go up there and actually accomplish something."

A graduate of Western Kentucky University in 1993, he has been a farmer ever since and now runs Comer Family Farms, a beef cattle, timber and hay operation that is one of the biggest agricultural enterprises in the state. He has also dabbled in insurance and restaurant franchises and served as a bank director.

He has also held public office, typically in the minority. From 2001 to 2012, he was a GOP representative in a Statehouse dominated by the other party.

From 2012 through 2015, he was the commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Agriculture. There, too, he points out, he had to work often with Democrats to accomplish objectives. He says he worked on a bipartisan basis to make Kentucky the first state to legalize industrial hemp.

"It'll make me a better congressman," he says of his political experience in Kentucky.

"I'm as disgruntled with Washington as anyone else. But you shouldn't stick things on bills that you know are going to fail just so you can blame the other party."

He wants to bring the same practical, compromising style to a 115th Congress.

He serves on the Agriculture Committee. He points to his considerable campaign contributions from the agricultural sector. "They are excited about having somebody who's a real farmer in Washington," he says. He also serves on the Oversight & Government Reform and Small Business committees.

The Army's Fort Campbell is an economic powerhouse in his district. It straddles Kentucky's southern border and Tennessee's northern one. Counting active duty soldiers, reservists, retirees and family members, the base and surrounding community are home to more than 240,000 people. Ensuring the base continues to play a major role in the Defense Department is a top cause for Comer.

Eventually, he says, he would like to sit on Ways and Means.

Comer's top policy goal is to lighten regulations on industry, especially on coal and agriculture companies, which are key players in his district. The Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers are 'two bureaucracies that have really held our district back," he says. Oil drilling, meat processing and light manufacturing industries also provide jobs in his district.



More broadly, Comer says he is focused on being engaged with his constituents, something he says they haven't had from the retiring incumbent, Republican Edward Whitfield, who Comer says "has pretty much checked out as a congressman."

Comer was born in Carthage, Tenn., but has lived his whole life – "since day two," he says – in nearby Tompkinsville, Ky. He makes his home there with his wife T.J. and their three children. He likes to hunt, fish and play golf.

Both Comer's grandfathers were Republican leaders in their counties, and each attended multiple national conventions. His maternal grandfather was a state representative just across the border in Tennessee. His father served on the county school board.

So it seemed natural for the young Comer to take to GOP politics. He was Monroe County Republican Party chairman from 1993 to 1995.

In 2015, a year before he won the GOP nomination to vie for the House seat being vacated by Whitfield, Comer had mounted an unsuccessful campaign for the Republican nomination for governor.

If Comer seemed destined for politics, he also seemed fated to farm. Not that all of his relatives were farmers. His father, for one, was a dentist. But Comer had his sights set on farming early, becoming president of the state's Future Farmers of America during college in 1990 and 1991.

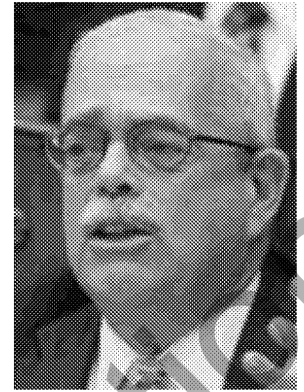
Rep. Gerald E. Connolly (D-Va.)

11th District, Washington suburbs -- parts of Fairfax and Prince William counties

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

The proximity of Connolly's district to Washington means he works closely on issues that affect federal workers, such as the capital's troubled transit system.



Connolly started his political career with a 1995 run for the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and a promise to make the transit system's Silver Line a reality. That project, a multibillion-dollar expansion of the Metro subway, was plagued by politically motivated fits and starts - but trains began rolling in the summer of 2014, six years after he won his House seat.

He says his part in the effort, as a county supervisor and a congressman, was educational: "My practical experience in trying to actually build something ... in the nation's capital, has, I think served to inform me in my legislative work on Capitol Hill."

A major focus of late for Connolly is the safety and reliability of the subway system. Many of his constituents use it to commute. Metro has been hampered by multiple accidents, some of them deadly, in recent years, as well as fires and other disruptions, including a daylong emergency closure of the entire system in March 2016 due to safety concerns.

At a spring 2017 hearing, he noted that more than a third of the federal workforce commutes using Metro, which makes its reliability a concern for the U.S. government in a way that other transit systems are not. "The federal government is the primary stakeholder in this transit system," he said, adding that he wants to ensure that federal support for the Metro system matches the government's "fundamental reliance on the system."

Connolly is also involved with issues about D.C.-area airports - two, Reagan National and Dulles International, are in Northern Virginia districts that border his - which must juggle the needs of local residents and powerful lawmakers who fly into and out of them frequently. He and other local lawmakers wrote a letter in April 2017 warning against changing local airport rules in a bid to make it easier for lawmakers to get back to their home states.

"No member of Congress appreciates another representative meddling with the assets in their state or district," the lawmakers wrote. "We, too, strongly oppose any attempts by other members to dictate operations at these airports for their own personal convenience at great cost to our communities and constituents."

One of Connolly's main platforms is the Oversight and Government Reform Committee - he is the top Democrat on its Government Operations panel, which regularly looks into federal data centers and information practices. In the 113th Congress (2013-14), he teamed with full committee Chairman Darrell Issa, R-Calif., on legislation to overhaul IT procurement.

The Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act, as it was known officially, strengthens the role of chief information officers at federal agencies, among other things. "When authority is diffuse, decision-making really suffers," Connolly said. The language was enacted as part of the fiscal 2015 defense authorization. Since then, he and Issa have continued to work on the issue, sponsoring language, added to the House's fiscal 2018 defense authorization, that would update the law.

While Connolly is generally loyal on votes that pit most Democrats against most Republicans - he his "party unity" scores since 2015 have ranged from 94 percent to 97 percent - he has been at odds with many fellow Democrats on trade. In 2015 he was an outspoken supporter of giving President Barack Obama fast-track Trade Promotion Authority. On a key procedural vote, Connolly was one of eight pro-trade Democrats to join most Republicans to approve the rule that set up votes on the trade promotion bill.

He sits on the Foreign Affairs Committee, and has criticized President Donald Trump's foreign policy, particularly his rhetoric toward North Korea. He told CNN in September that while the United States must retain a military option, "I don't think many people take that seriously, because of the consequences on the peninsula in the South, as well as the North and in Japan. I do think what's missing is a carrot. There are things the North Korean regime desperately would like. Recognition, admission, inclusion, trade investment opportunities.... There has to be a carrot along with a stick." He's expressed similar concerns at committee hearings.

Connolly grew up in Boston; his mother was a nurse and his father worked in life insurance. His father brought 8-year-old Gerald along to set up placards for Sen. John F. Kennedy's re-election campaign in Boston.

In the mid-1960s, he was a student at Maryknoll Fathers Junior Seminary in Pennsylvania. But doubts about a life of celibacy, as well as disillusionment over the church's silence on the Vietnam War, led him away from the priesthood. After graduating from Maryknoll College with a degree in literature in 1971, he worked for nonprofit organizations, including the American Freedom from Hunger Foundation. That's where he met his wife, Catherine Smith, a former nun.

Connolly earned a master's degree in public administration from Harvard, then went to work for the Senate. Ten years later he returned to the private sector, serving as vice president for the Washington office of SRI International, a nonprofit, independent research and development center.

He became chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors in 2004, nine years after his initial election to the board. He won a heated 2008 House primary, then handily defeated Republican Keith Fimian in the contest to succeed retiring Republican Thomas M. Davis III. Their 2010 rematch proved to be a nail-biter, with Connolly edging out Fimian by fewer than 1,000 votes in a race that wasn't certified until a week after Election Day.

He briefly considered a 2012 run for the Senate, but dropped those plans when former Gov. Tim Kaine entered the race. Running in a redrawn 11th District, Connolly has taken at least 57 percent of the vote in his last three elections and now seems to have a fairly secure seat.

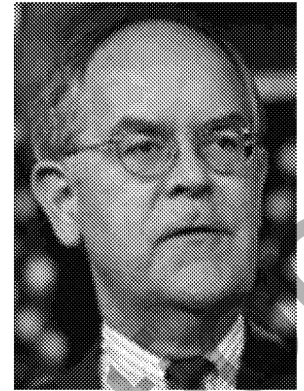
Rep. Jim Cooper (D-Tenn.)

5th District, Nashville

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

Cooper's commentaries on politics can be both depressing and energizing - he warns of a "Congress of ostriches" enabling disastrous economic strategies, but he also has polished sales pitches for ways to make things better. The moderate Democrat has become a point man for groups focused on America's fiscal health. In addition, he has pushed for the Pentagon to have more flexibility when it comes to sequestration for fiscal 2016.



Cooper has watched Congress evolve since the Reagan administration. He was elected to the House in 1982, at the age of 28. A failed Senate bid against actor/lawyer Fred Thompson in 1994 sent him packing, but he returned to the House after eight years in the private sector. His indictments of present-day Washington are not uncommon: party leadership teams are too polarizing; the legislature is a "farm team for K Street"; too many members put parochial concerns ahead of the national interest.

"Moderates are nearly extinct," Cooper said. "We had been the lifeblood of Congress, and now we're an endangered species." For a man facing extinction, Cooper usually appears to be in a decent mood. He can be scolding and matter-of-fact, but he also cracks jokes and seems to thoroughly enjoy being a legislator.

Some of Cooper's attempts to shake up Congress target lawmakers directly. In the 112th Congress (2011-12), he helped organize No Labels, a nonpartisan coalition bent on improving Congress' work environment. They scored a victory in early 2013: A law to suspend the limit on federal borrowing for four months included the "No Budget, No Pay" plan championed by Cooper. It would have suspended lawmaker salaries for a chamber that did not adopt a fiscal 2014 budget by April 15. The Senate adopted its first budget in five years. "That was not a coincidence," Cooper said, and he wants a permanent version of that arrangement.

Cooper's greatest hope, however, is that lawmakers change their perspective on federal liabilities. "I'm big on accurate diagnosis," he said. If people are using accurate information, "then the treatment options sort themselves out."

One of Cooper's primary aggravations is that the federal government uses cash-based accounting to measure its debts. A switch to accrual accounting, by some estimates, would show \$200 trillion in obligations and a far more tenuous future for any federal spending program. Cooper has also kicked the tires on "generational" accounting - in 2014, he and Illinois Republican Aaron Schock introduced a measure to require 75-year projections of the fiscal impact of proposed legislation.

Cooper is a co-chairman of the Blue Dog Coalition, a group of fiscally conservative House Democrats; he also works with Fix the Debt and The Can Kicks Back, outside organizations attempting to steer congressional debate. In the 111th Congress (2009-10), Cooper and Virginia Republican Frank R. Wolf were instrumental in goading President Barack Obama to create a fiscal commission, eventually known as Simpson-Bowles, to recommend long-term changes. He was also one of 25 House Democrats to support a proposed balanced-budget amendment to the Constitution in 2011.

Since returning to the House in 2003, Cooper has been on the Armed Services Committee. In 2013, he became the ranking member of its Strategic Forces Subcommittee, overseeing the nuclear arsenal and space programs.

In 2017, Cooper joined with Strategic Forces chairman Mike Rogers of Alabama to push a proposal that would create a new military service focused on space and operated by the Air Force called Space Corps. While the proposal never saw a full committee hearing, was opposed by the White House and the Pentagon, it was included in the fiscal 2018 defense authorization bill, passing the full House 344-81.

Cooper sees parochialism as a big impediment to developing long-term plans for national defense. As the House worked on the fiscal 2015 defense authorization, Cooper fought the effort of Republican Joe Wilson to increase funding for a plutonium-processing plant in his South Carolina district - the Obama administration had deemed the program too expensive and halted it. He also tried to block Montana Republican Steve Daines from altering language regarding missile silos, some of which are in Montana. Members "should not act like the mayor of their little local base," Cooper said. He favors allowing the Pentagon to conduct a new round of base closures and realignments.

He sees the "sequestration" spending cuts, enacted in 2011, as having a potentially disastrous impact on nuclear and space programs, which have large maintenance costs. He convinced Wisconsin Republican Paul D. Ryan, the Budget chairman, to join him on a 2013 bill that would grant the Pentagon more discretion in how it distributes those cuts. In December 2014 he said the best way Congress could pressure Russia to comply with treaty obligations would be to end caps on military spending.

"I actually think that what would scare Vladimir Putin the most would be if we lift defense sequestration," he said.

Cooper pushed to give the Pentagon flexibility in implementing sequestration should it return in fiscal 2016, arguing that would permit dense officials to shift funds toward high priority programs if the department winds up with less money than it plans to have.

Under the fiscal 2016 defense authorization measure, lawmakers in the Strategic Forces markup rejected in a 23-40 vote, an effort Cooper to trim \$125 million from the \$345 million authorization for the mixed oxide fuel fabrication facility in South Carolina, meant for the reprocessing of weapons-grade plutonium into commercial nuclear fuel.

The panel also rejected, in a 27-35 party-line vote, a Cooper amendment to strike language that would permanently prohibit authorized funds from being used for fixed site radiological portal monitors in foreign countries, which are deployed to detect nuclear material crossing borders. Cooper conceded the portals were not completely effective, but that they made nuclear smuggling more difficult.

Cooper is also a member of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee. In the 113th Congress, revelations about domestic surveillance programs of the National Security Agency set off many discussions about privacy rights. Working with Connecticut Democrat Jim Himes and Texas Republican Lamar Smith, Cooper proposed creating a presidentially appointed, Senate-confirmed inspector general for the NSA. The suggestion was rolled into an intelligence programs authorization and enacted in 2014.

The studious Cooper - he happily dubs himself a "super nerd" - has diverse legislative interests. He has taught a class on health policy at Vanderbilt University for more than a decade, and he expects major adjustments from both parties in the years ahead. "There's an unlimited demand and there's a limited supply," he said. "So how do you curb the unlimited demand? It takes everything you've got."

He also stays up on federal research efforts. Cooper's office developed the Golden Goose Award in 2012, to highlight obscure federally funded research projects with big payoffs. In 2014, he and Wyoming Republican Cynthia M. Lummis produced a bill requiring research funded by the National Institutes of Health to analyze the effects of treatments on both men and women.

Cooper is the middle son of Prentice Cooper, Tennessee's governor during World War II. His father died when Cooper was 14. He also fondly remembers his grandfather, who lived to be 91. Both men were born in the 1800s. "We did not have history in our house," he said. "It was current events." But he was not too exposed to politics as a child. He attended Groton, the prestigious Massachusetts prep school, zipped through the University of North Carolina in three years, went to Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar and got a law degree from Harvard.

In 1982 he defeated Senate Majority Leader Howard H. Baker Jr.'s daughter, Cissy, to become the youngest member of the House. Cooper developed a reputation as a deal-maker and was a key player on health care and telecommunications policy. But he ran for the Senate in 1994, a catastrophically bad year for Democrats, and was trounced by Thompson.

(In 2016, Cooper declined to join the other eight members of Tennessee's House delegation in co-sponsoring a bill to name Nashville's new federal courthouse for Thompson. "It's not a big deal to me who the courthouse is named for," Cooper said.)

Cooper, who represents the district where the courthouse is located and lost to Thompson in a 1994 Senate race, is one of two Democrats in Tennessee's congressional delegation. The other, Steve Cohen, supports the bill by Republican Marsha Blackburn.

Cooper entered the investment banking world for eight years, and he valued that experience for understanding how government regulation affects business. An open House seat drew him back to politics in 2002, and he won easily.

One of Cooper's hobbies befits a representative from Nashville - he plays the banjo. He also keeps a large portrait of Andrew Jackson, his city's most famous debt-fighting Democrat, in his Washington office.

Rep. Elijah E. Cummings (D-Md.)

7th District, Central -- most of Baltimore, Ellicott City

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

Cummings, the ranking Democrat on the Oversight and Government Reform Committee, was sidelined after heart surgery in May 2017.

The Washington Post reported in September 2017 that he told his staff members after returning to the Capitol that his recovery had given him a renewed focus on the importance of his work.

"I am thoroughly convinced, and you will never convince me otherwise, that what I have gone through was for a purpose," he said.

He also told them, "Every time you look at your little children, ask the question, 'What kind of future will they have?'"

He's likely to spend the rest of the 115th Congress fighting with Republicans, especially committee chairman Trey Gowdy of South Carolina, over the rights of voters and federal workers, as well as pressing his GOP colleagues about investigations into Russia's influence on the 2016 election and into the business dealings of members of the Trump family and administration.

"We've got to concentrate on the fact that the Russians interfered with our elections," Cummings said in May 2017 on ABC's "This Week" program. "That's something that goes to the very heart of our democracy. And we can't have people in Russia determining who will be the president of the United States and what policies will be pursued."

Cummings in May 2017 sent letters to two senior U.S. intelligence officials requesting any materials documenting conversations they had with President Donald Trump or White House staff members about the FBI or congressional Russia investigations. He also has used his post on the Oversight committee to request that Cabinet secretaries provide documents related to any expenses by their department for products or services provided by businesses owned by or affiliated with the Trump Organization.

Cummings said federal workers could be put in a difficult place if the president and his family get financial benefit from government activities.

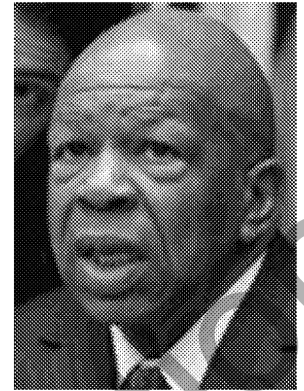
Trump's "continued ownership of private businesses also places federal employees in compromised positions when they work on official activities," Cummings said.

He opposed the president's creation of a commission to look for potential instances of voter fraud in the 2016 election. The commission would spend "taxpayer dollars to investigate voter fraud, which we already know does not exist."

He added, "I am old enough to remember when African Americans were denied access to the ballot box, and I fear that we are watching history repeat itself."

Still, there's one matter on which Cummings and Trump have proven to be allies. The congressman spoke with Trump in March 2017 about ways to rein in the increase in federal spending on prescription drugs.

Cummings said he and Rep. Peter Welch, the Vermont Democrat, told Trump about their plans for a bill that would give the Medicare program the same leverage that insurers use in seeking bargains on drug costs. They



want the Department of Health and Human Services to be able to make a list of preferred drugs, known as a formulary, for Medicare's Part D pharmacy plans.

Medicare now relies on insurers to manage the Part D programs, a roughly \$100 billion annual expense. These companies seek to strike the best deals on drug prices, using their own formularies as tools in many cases. Advocates for direct Medicare negotiations argue that the program as a whole would get better deals acting on its own, leveraging its clout as a top buyer of medicines rather than fracturing it among middlemen.

Cummings has used his seat on the Oversight panel to shine a spotlight on price hikes for specific drugs, such as the Epi-Pen rescue treatment for severe allergic reactions, and costly medicines for multiple sclerosis.

Violence in Cummings' home town of Baltimore and in New York and Ferguson, Mo., thrust him into the limelight in recent years amid a debate over overhauling the criminal justice system.

Cummings joined fellow Maryland Democrats in urging the Justice Department to investigate the death of 25-year-old Freddie Gray, a Baltimore man who died while in police custody. The medical examiner's office ruled Gray's death a homicide.

"We must know whether there is a pattern or practice by the department that systematically violates people's rights," said Cummings, who helped quell riots in Baltimore after Gray's death. "Mr. Gray's death is only the most recent case underscoring the need to examine our police department from top to bottom."

The prosecutor, State's Attorney Marilyn J. Mosby, filed charges ranging from murder to reckless endangerment against six Baltimore police officers in the Gray case. Three of the officers were found not guilty. Mosby later dropped charges against the rest.

Cummings was chosen as the Oversight committee's top Democrat in late 2010. He quickly rallied panel Democrats behind a three-part agenda: quality-of-life issues, such as home ownership and access to health care and education; improving government accountability; and consumer protections.

Cummings has held onto his seat on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, where he serves on the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation panel. Baltimore's bustling port is vital to his district's economy.

Born in Baltimore, Cummings was one of seven children of former sharecroppers who migrated from South Carolina. "We did not have many opportunities," he recalled of his childhood. "We did not play on grass. We played on asphalt." But his "two very strong parents" set him on a productive course and saved to buy their own home in a city neighborhood that was integrating.

He graduated from Howard University in Washington, D.C., where he was student government president. He said his mother was hesitant about attending his graduation ceremony because she did not want to embarrass her son in front of "all those sophisticated people" at Howard. Cummings told her he would be honored to have her there.

He then earned a law degree from the University of Maryland. Six years later, he was elected to the state House. He rose to the chamber's second-ranking position, at the time the highest state office ever held by an African-American.

Rep. Kweisi Mfume resigned from the House in 1996 to become president of the NAACP. Running against 26 other Democrats in the special-election primary that resulted, Cummings garnered more than 37 percent of the vote. He easily dispatched his Republican opposition and has not come remotely close to defeat since then. He won re-election to his House seat in 2016 with 75 percent of the vote.

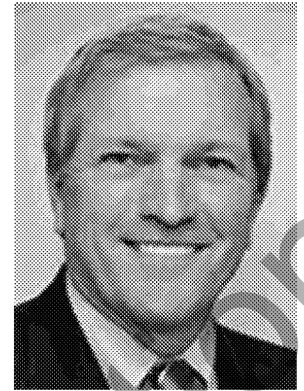
Rep. Mark DeSaulnier (D-Calif.)

11th District, Most of Contra Costa County

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

DeSaulnier is a mainstream House Democrat, passionate about education and environmental issues. His long career at nearly every level of state and local politics included a switch in parties from Republican to Democrat in 2000.



The Californian found he was afraid to go against his colleagues if he felt it was the right thing to do, and switched affiliation, a move that fascinates some of his younger staffers. "They can't believe that there used to be liberal Republicans," he says. "It's really amazing. It's like trying to explain to young people what it was like to communicate before cell phones."

DeSaulnier still has bipartisan tendencies and often partners with Republicans on legislation, including bills to make college more affordable. He is a member of the Education and the Workforce Committee.

Alongside Republican Reps. Tom MacArthur of New Jersey and Lee Zeldin and Peter T. King of New York, he introduced a bill to change the way Federal Pell Grant awards are reported to the IRS. The lawmakers want to exclude grants used for non-tuition expenses, such as housing, from a students' taxable income the same way grants used for tuition are excluded.

"It resonates for me personally, when my dad lost his job when I was a freshman in college," DeSaulnier said during a 2017 Education and the Workforce subcommittee hearing. "I could put together the money for tuition, but I couldn't for the room and board."

He has also introduced legislation allowing students to refinance the interest rates on their federal student loans to the rates banks pay to borrow money from the Federal Reserve. "It is patently unfair that the same big banks that toppled our economy borrow from the federal government at extremely low interest rates while student borrowers are struggling to pay back their loans," DeSaulnier said in a statement.

He is also a member of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee. Like most other California Democrats, he strongly supports federal and state regulations designed to protect air, water and endangered species. DeSaulnier's district includes a Chevron oil refinery in Richmond. He has introduced legislation to extend whistleblower protections to oil refinery employees working in U.S. territory to encourage them to report dangerous conditions and avoid oil spills.

"My district is home to several oil refineries, and our community knows firsthand the long lasting impact of preventable accidents," DeSaulnier said. "We can't stand by and watch one more person die for fear of being fired for reporting a problem."

In the wake of the revelations in 2016 about Volkswagen cheating on emissions tests on millions of its cars, DeSaulnier introduced a bill to amend the Clean Air Act to establish a penalty of up to 15 years in prison for bypassing or rendering inoperative air pollution control devices.

He said Volkswagen executives had not taken personal responsibility for evading emissions control requirements. "This legislation will address decades of fraudulent actions by industry bad actors," he said.

DeSaulnier also delves into transportation issues from his seat on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. He teamed up with Pennsylvania Republican Lloyd K. Smucker on legislation that would authorize \$100 million in grant funding for cities using innovative technology to improve transportation infrastructure.

While in his first term in the House, DeSaulnier was diagnosed with leukemia. He said in May 2016 that he had completed chemotherapy and it had not impaired his ability to do his job as a member of the House.

DeSaulnier told the East Bay Times, a newspaper in his district, that "with all the respect to the doctors, their talent is not communication." He said he wanted to find a way to encourage doctors to provide clear written explanations so patients could better understand their diagnosis and their chances of survival.

The Rules Committee adopted DeSaulnier's amendment to the fiscal 2018 omnibus spending bill to fund a study to improve doctor-patient communication. His amendment would increase funding to the National Cancer Institute by \$1 million for the study, offsetting it with a \$1 million decrease to the General Departmental Management of the Health and Human Services Department.

He has championed legislation with Illinois Sen. Richard J. Durbin to create a national standard for concussion safety in schools. Their bill would require schools receiving federal funds to develop plans for educating and treating students. Various sports organizations have endorsed the bill, including the NFL and NCAA.

DeSaulnier grew up as one of five children in Lowell, Mass. DeSaulnier's mother stayed at home while his father pursued politics as a member of the state legislature, called the Massachusetts General Court, and as a Superior Court judge. But while his son was attending college at Holy Cross, the elder DeSaulnier was disbarred over allegations of sentence-fixing and was forced to resign.

DeSaulnier has said in interviews that his father suffered from drinking and gambling problems. He committed suicide in 1989. Still, DeSaulnier credits his father and a Jesuit education for sparking his interest in public service. "I used to decry the lack of civic engagement in this country, but that's as much our fault as the public's because we don't make it relevant to them and also we disappoint them," he said. "That sort of goes back to the thing with my dad ... they expect more from us, they don't expect this pettiness."

DeSaulnier moved to California in the early 1970s, having a varied career - probation officer, hotel worker and, eventually, restaurateur.

His first taste of politics was in 1988 when he was appointed to the Concord, California, planning commission. He moved on to the Concord City Council in 1991 and eventually became mayor in 1993. He was appointed to the Contra Costa County board of supervisors by Republican Gov. Pete Wilson in 1994. He stepped into statewide politics in 2006 when he ran for a state Assembly seat and then the state Senate in 2008.

Throughout his political rise, DeSaulnier had the mentoring of George Miller, the congressman who represented the 11th District in Contra Costa, Calif., for 40 years. The two met while DeSaulnier was working at his restaurant, TR's Bar & Grill.

When Miller announced his retirement in January 2014, he endorsed DeSaulnier as his House successor. DeSaulnier won his district's Democratic primary with 59 percent of the vote and in November defeated Tue Phan, the Republican opponent, by capturing 67 percent of the vote.

His 2014 run for the House of Representatives wasn't his first. In 2009, DeSaulnier ran in a primary special election for California's 10th District spot to succeed then-Democratic Rep. Ellen Tauscher. He came in second to then-Lt. Gov. John Garamendi, who won with 25.7 percent of the vote.

An avid runner, DeSaulnier has completed 21 marathons.

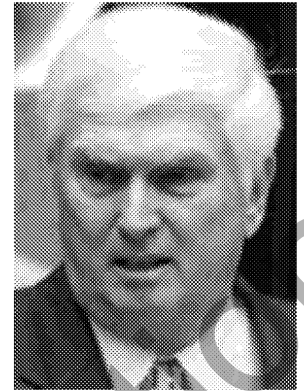
Rep. John J. Duncan Jr. (R-Tenn.)

2nd District, East -- Knoxville

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

Duncan said on July 31, 2017 that he would not seek another term in the House. He first came to the House in 1988, winning a special election to succeed his father, John J. Duncan, who died in office. Duncans have represented the Knoxville-based 2nd District for five straight decades. John J. Duncan began his House service in 1965.



The younger Duncan remembers his father as the “sweetest, kindest, toughest, hardest-working man I’ve ever known” and a model for how to conduct business.

“I just kept doing a lot of the same things that my dad did, including giving away lucky pennies, and having the water booth at the fair, and having a barbecue each year before the election.”

That retail politicking has sustained Duncan through minor political adversities. It also gives him the leeway to vote his conscience. He is an emphatic fiscal conservative, but he’s also a believer in the legislative back-and-forth that was more prevalent in his father’s day.

Generally, Duncan is set in his ways. He dislikes cell phones and email — although he has taken to iPads in recent years, if only to show pictures of his grandchildren. He keeps constituents in the loop with a newsletter he writes himself, peppered with anecdotes and stats culled from whatever he consumes while indulging a voracious reading habit.

He has stuck with the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee throughout his House career. Duncan never chaired the panel and doesn’t expect to.

By his accounting, GOP leaders based chairmanships on campaign fundraising and party unity after taking over the House in 1994. “They wanted your money and your voting card, and I didn’t really want to give them either one,” he said.

But Duncan chaired three different subcommittees over a total of 14 years. When Pennsylvania’s Bill Shuster became the full-committee chairman in 2013, “they pretty much didn’t know what to do with me,” Duncan said.

He was finally named the vice chairman and tasked with leading temporary panels studying specific issues. The first made recommendations for intermodal freight strategies, and the second considered the uses of public-private partnerships.

Duncan held the gavel of the Highways and Transit Subcommittee in the 112th Congress (2011-12) and helped negotiate a two-year authorization of surface transportation programs enacted in 2012. He considers provisions to expedite permitting and environmental reviews to be the most important parts of that law.

Duncan would rather not raise the gasoline and diesel taxes that currently feed the Highway Trust Fund. In 2012, he backed an unsuccessful GOP proposal to use federal oil and gas leases as a dedicated source of revenue for highway programs; he also wouldn’t mind taking transportation funding directly from the Treasury when needed.

Duncan chaired the Aviation Subcommittee for six years. He contributed to a significant increase in federal support for aviation programs, enacted in 2000, as well as tougher air security rules put in place after the Sept. 11 attacks. His current concern, however, is with bloat in security programs. He calls for the abolition of the

Federal Air Marshal Service and questions whether increases in airport security hiring have yielded improvements.

Duncan decried the ban which House Republican leaders imposed on appropriations earmarks in 2011, calling it “was one of the biggest mistakes that we ever made. We didn’t save any money; we just put more power in the bureaucracy.”

He noted that “I never did ask for an earmark that I wouldn’t have liked to put on the front page of our [local news] papers. I never did ask for a study of the sex life of the African bee or some kind of crazy thing like that.”

He is the only remaining Republican of the six GOP House members who voted against the 2002 authorization of military action in Iraq.

He thought the war was unnecessary and unaffordable, although constituents supported it.

But, he said, “what was clearly the most unpopular vote I ever cast slowly, slowly, slowly turned into the most popular vote I ever cast.”

As for authorizing the use of U.S. armed forces against the Islamic State, Duncan said in early 2015, “I don’t want to see young Americans killed in what is thus far a regional civil war between Shia and Sunni Muslims.”

He said if any American went to fight with the Islamic State army, “they should have their citizenship immediately revoked. If any of them try to do anything to people in the United States, they should be given the death penalty without delay.”

He said in June 2015 that “fiscal conservatives should be the ones most horrified by and most opposed to the horrendous waste and trillions of dollars we have spent on these very unnecessary wars in the Middle East.”

The Duncan family wasn’t exactly landed gentry. “My grandparents were good people, but they had 10 kids and an outhouse and not much more,” Duncan remembered. “My dad hitchhiked into Knoxville with \$5 in his pocket” and worked his way through the University of Tennessee. After World War II he became a lawyer.

Jimmy Duncan thought about a career in baseball. His father was part of a business group that brought minor league baseball to Knoxville in 1956. Jimmy spent five and a half happy seasons as the Smokies’ batboy and was the public address announcer during his first year in college.

After graduating, he headed to Washington. Duncan taught one year in Virginia at Alexandria’s T.C. Williams High School while attending George Washington University’s law school at night. He then switched to full-time studies.

His legal career led to seven years as a criminal court judge in Knox County, a position he held when his father, in failing health, announced that the 100th Congress (1987-88) would be his last. His father died in 1988, shortly after that announcement. In his first House race, Duncan campaigned primarily as his father’s successor.

He won 56 percent of the vote and wasn’t seriously challenged after that.

Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-N.C.)

5th District, Northwest -- Winston-Salem

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

Foxx brings a wealth of experience as a college teacher, a community college president, and a state legislator to her job as chairwoman of the Committee on Education and the Workforce in the 115th Congress (2017-2018).



The granddaughter of Italian immigrants, Foxx grew up in rural North Carolina, with parents who did not graduate from high school. Her family's home had no running water or electricity until she was a teenager.

"I came from an extraordinarily poor family and going to college wasn't in the plan," she recalled in a January 2017 speech to the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

Foxx took an after-school job as a janitor at her high school. As she was sweeping floors one day, a teacher told her she was smart and needed to go to college, marry a college man and get out of town.

Foxx did all three. She earned her bachelor's degree in English and advanced degrees from the University of North Carolina. In addition to her work in education, she and her husband started a nursery and landscaping business. Foxx served in the state Senate from 1995 to 2004, when she won her House seat.

"I don't think there's anybody in this Congress who appreciates more the value of completing a degree -- a four-year degree -- than I do," she said during a hearing of her committee in February 2017.

However, Foxx told the higher education group that state universities and colleges whose funding has been reduced by their state legislatures in recent years should not expect to get any new money from Congress.

"There isn't any more money at the federal level," Foxx said. "And I just don't see how schools can look for any more money coming from the federal government, from taxpayer dollars."

"It's not rocket science that we need to look to" in order to reduce the cost of higher education, Foxx argued. She suggested that one cost-saving step would be to encourage capable students to take college courses while they're still in high school.

She said college-bound juniors and seniors sometimes take courses in high school that they essentially repeat a year or two later in their freshman and sophomore years in college. "I think legislators are going to begin to say, 'We're paying for this education twice. Why are we doing that?'" Foxx said.

Her view is that for many students, not only is a college education far too costly, but it leaves many graduates with few useful skills, or none at all.

"A degree should be the accumulation of competencies over time. And in too many cases students are graduating with a degree and no competencies," she said at her committee's February 2017 hearing on higher education.

She argues that the term "vocational education" shouldn't have a pejorative connotation. "I'm assuming it's 100 percent of people who graduate from college want a job. And so in my opinion, all education is vocational education," she said, noting that Harvard College was started in the 1600s as a vocational school: its purpose was to educate men for careers as ministers.

Another of Foxx's goals as chairwoman is to simplify student aid programs.

“There are currently six different types of federal student loans, nine repayment plans, eight forgiveness programs, and 32 deferment and forbearance options, each with its own rules and regulations. The current system,” she argued, “is too complex and it leaves students and their families confused about their financial options and responsibilities.”

She has accused the Obama administration of ensnaring colleges and universities in a welter of regulations, citing a Vanderbilt University study that estimated that compliance with federal rules costs colleges and universities \$27 billion annually.

“That red tape has made it more difficult for students to complete their education quickly and affordably,” Foxx said. “It has also gotten in the way of innovation that would make it easier for students to pursue and earn a college degree. It's time for the federal government to get out of the way.”

Foxx is a defender of for-profit colleges. “During the Obama administration we noticed a coordinated attack on the proprietary sector,” she said at her committee’s February 2017 hearing on higher education.

Foxx does not approve of an Obama administration rule meant to help students determine whether a program is likely to lead to a job that pays them enough to repay their education loans. The so-called gainful employment rule requires that for-profit schools and certificate programs at nonprofit schools ensure their graduates don’t end up using more than 8 percent of their total income to make education loan payments.

Foxx said that rule and other actions by the Education Department treated for-profit colleges unfairly. The Obama administration cracked down on for-profit schools in response to several investigations and thousands of student complaints about aggressive recruitment tactics, poor quality of education and difficulty finding jobs in their field.

Foxx argues that those same students are hurt when for-profit schools are forced to close, leaving them scrambling to transfer credits and apply elsewhere to finish their degrees.

Her committee also has jurisdiction over labor law. In February 2017 the House, using the Congressional Review Act, voted to rescind an Obama administration regulation that had required companies bidding on federal contracts to disclose past labor law violations.

Foxx and other Republicans said the rule added to the burden of the contracting process. “Law abiding, small business owners – the backbone of our nation’s economy – will be less inclined to bid on federal contracts,” Foxx said. “With less competition, hardworking taxpayers will be forced to pay more for goods and services provided to the U.S. government.”

Foxx took the helm of the Education and the Workforce Committee after Minnesotan John Kline retired at the end of 2016.

She had been the GOP Conference secretary for the 113th Congress (2013-14). Republican leaders had picked her to be on the Rules Committee starting in 2009, and in 2011 she got a waiver so she could be on Rules and also chair an Education and the Workforce subcommittee.

Her political career began with a dozen years on the Watauga County Board of Education. She was an assistant dean of Appalachian State University, a college instructor and president of Mayland Community College in western North Carolina.

When Republican Rep. Richard M. Burr decided to run for the Senate in 2004, Foxx entered the race to succeed him. She prevailed over seven other Republicans in the primary and went on to defeat Democrat Jim A. Harrell in November. At 61, she was one of the oldest members of the freshman class of 2005.

A special redistricting ordered by a federal court didn’t change the Republican leaning of Foxx’s district, which includes nearly three quarters of her old district.

She won re-election in 2016 with 58 percent in a re-match with Democrat Josh Brannon, who’d lost to her in 2014.

Rep. Bob Gibbs (R-Ohio)

7th District, Outer Cleveland suburbs; most of Canton

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

Gibbs' career as a hog farmer and seasoned state lawmaker has shaped his priorities in Congress and his long tenure on the Transportation and Infrastructure and Agriculture Committees. He often advocates for protecting farmers and reducing regulations, particularly in his bill dealing with permits for pesticides.

His legislation, which the House has passed four times, would nullify a permit requirement for pesticide use stemming from a 2009 court decision. Gibbs argues the permit is unnecessary and an undue roadblock, but Democrats have protested that it is necessary to monitor the effects of pesticides near water.

Gibbs attempted to pass the legislation in the 114th Congress as a measure to speed up pesticide treatments combatting mosquitos carrying the Zika virus. "Removing this redundant NPDES permit is appropriate because the EPA already has full control and can handle the situation like they did for over 60 years before this court case," he said during House debate on his 2017 bill.

The Transportation and Infrastructure Water Resources Subcommittee is the showroom floor for Republican arguments that over-regulation is hurting agricultural and energy production. Gibbs was the subcommittee's chairman for six years before hitting his term limit in 2017. He has been a key voice criticizing the EPA, shepherding a bill to block the agency's rule, later withdrawn, which defines what bodies of water it can regulate under the Clean Water Act.

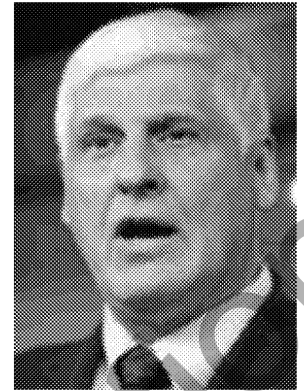
"We risk the potential to go backwards [on] that progress we've made since 1972 in water quality and protecting the environment of this country," he said in a 2016 Agriculture Committee hearing. "Because when you add on so much more red tape and bureaucracy, people at some point throw their hands up in the air."

Gibbs has pushed to secure funding for the Olmstead Locks and Dam project on the Ohio River, which runs through his state. The defense appropriations bill for fiscal 2018 included his provision to protect another local water source, Lake Erie, from being used as a place to dump dredged sediment without a state water quality certification. "This is ensuring that Lake Erie remains on the path towards a healthier natural resource," Gibbs said.

Gibbs voted against an amendment to a 2016 water projects bill to give \$170 million to help Flint, Mich., improve its water system. "I think it has the potential to set a dangerous precedent moving forward because we've been in an area that is not really the federal government's area," he said.

On the Agriculture Committee, he has repeatedly pressed for farm measures that support what he calls "market-driven planting decisions." He voted for the 2014 farm bill, which included an overhaul of target prices - the points for various commodities at which federal farm subsidies kick in. In earlier sessions he had opposed iterations of the bill that did not take market prices into consideration.

Through the overhaul, Gibbs championed continuing crop insurance. "I am a strong proponent to maintain a safety net program," he said, as a safeguard against drought, floods or unforeseen problems with global supplies. "You can have a market distortion event that could bankrupt farmers that you have no control over."



On most fiscal matters, Gibbs lines up with mainstream Republicans. He opposed the 2015 omnibus spending bill, which included funding for Syrian refugees coming to the U.S. and Planned Parenthood. "We cannot continue to govern from deadline to deadline and be held hostage by an arbitrary, self-imposed 60-vote rule in the Senate," he said in a statement.

In 1974, Gibbs graduated from Ohio State University with a degree in animal husbandry. "I didn't grow up on the farm," he said. "I grew up in a Cleveland suburb. I became a farmer. So I'm either crazy or stupid." While working as a hog farmer, he also developed the hobby of building and restoring homes, doing the plumbing and electrical work himself. When he got rid of the hogs, around the time that he started in state government, he continued working as a property manager.

Gibbs burnished his political skills while rising through the Ohio Farm Bureau, starting out as a volunteer on the membership team and ending up as the president of the state-level organization.

He won election to the Ohio House, where an unexpected sales tax issue tied to his district drew him into tax policy; a few years later, he was chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. He served three terms and won a seat in the state Senate in 2009. He was named Ways and Means chairman of that chamber, as well as the No. 2 Republican on its Agriculture Committee.

Running in the 18th District in 2010, Gibbs earned the Republican nomination by taking 21 percent of the vote, which was just enough to finish atop the eight-candidate field. He beat the runner-up by fewer than 200 votes.

Incumbent Democrat Zack Space won by comfortable margins in 2006 and 2008. He opposed the 2010 health care overhaul and won the endorsement of the National Rifle Association. But Gibbs appealed to the district's conservative leanings. He took advantage of a bad year for Democrats nationally - and a worse year for Democrats in Ohio - winning nearly 54 percent of the vote to 40 percent for Space.

Decennial reapportionment cost Ohio two House seats heading into the 2012 election. Gibbs ran in the newly drawn 7th District, which took in more land to the north and less of Appalachia. Overall, the district is GOP friendly. Gibbs went up against Democrat Joyce R. Healy-Abrams, a longtime Ohioan who operated a file management business with her husband. He took more than 56 percent of the vote.

In 2013 Republicans considered his seat to be one of the most vulnerable and backed him with additional fundraising. The move dissuaded Democrats from supporting a viable candidate and Gibbs ended up unopposed in the 2014 general election. He breezed through his 2016 campaign, winning the general election by a wide margin of 35 points.

The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee is taking aim at Gibbs again in 2018, identifying him as a top target to unseat.

Rep. Jimmy Gomez (D-Calif.)

34th District, Downtown Los Angeles

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

Gomez has spent his career in politics and labor organizing and fits into the progressive wing of the Democratic caucus.

After winning his seat in a June 2017 special election, he joined the Natural Resources and Oversight and Government Reform committees.

Gomez is a member of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus. He also got a leadership spot co-chairing the Rebuilding America Task Force, part of the Democratic Caucus' jobs task force.

In that role he's pushed for infrastructure legislation, which is relevant to his traffic-heavy district. Gomez and his co-chairs on the task force wrote President Donald Trump advocating an infrastructure plan.

"Nowhere is the need for increased infrastructure spending more apparent than in Los Angeles," Gomez said during a task force meeting. "Our state and local agencies ... have done most of the heavy lifting so far, and it's time for the federal government to step up and offer a job-creating infrastructure package that will propel our city forward."

He's been a strong proponent of protecting the residency status of so-called Dreamers, undocumented immigrants who came to the U.S. as children and enrolled in an Obama administration program to protect their residency. The name 'Dreamers' comes from legislation called the Dream Act first introduced in 2001 and numerous times since to provide such immigrants a path to permanent legal status. Gomez co-sponsored a version in 2017.

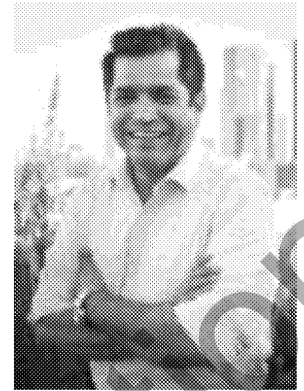
Gomez introduced a bill soon after he was sworn into office in July 2017 that is aimed at detecting possible Russian influences on the Trump campaign and administration. The legislation would require the Director of National Intelligence to submit a report to Congress on any foreign powers that have attempted to influence the president or his administration.

He wants high schools to teach media literacy, an issue he addressed in the state legislature. "A lot of the fake news conversation came right after the 2016 election, but it's something that had been discussed before Donald Trump ever ran for president," he said. "I thought the best way to come up with it was somehow teaching, oftentimes, young people to spot how you tell what is fake, what is real."

Gomez won the special election on June 6, but did not take the oath of office until July 11. His swearing in was delayed because Democratic leaders in California needed him in the state assembly in Sacramento to vote for a bill to extend the life of the cap-and-trade program, which as the Los Angeles Times explained requires companies to buy permits to release greenhouse gas emissions.

The delay in Gomez taking his seat in the House prompted a fellow Californian, House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, to write an op-ed in the Wall Street Journal accusing him of leaving his constituents without representation.

Gomez's predecessor in Congress, Xavier Becerra, had announced his resignation in December 2016 after being nominated as California's attorney general. He resigned from the House on Jan. 24, 2017.



Gomez grew up in Southern California. His parents often struggled to make ends meet: "When I was seven years old I got pneumonia and spent seven days in the hospital. That stay almost bankrupted my family. They ended up having to make the decision of either paying their mortgage or paying the hospital."

He worked at Subway and Target after high school. He enrolled in community college and eventually transferred to UCLA, where he earned a bachelor's degree in political science. He went on to earn a master's in public policy from Harvard.

Gomez has worked exclusively in politics and organizing since. He was an aide for a Los Angeles City Councilor and for former Rep. Hilda Solis, and worked as political director for the United Nurses Associations of California. In his first run for office he was elected to the state Assembly in 2012, representing parts of eastern and downtown Los Angeles.

Gomez served for more than four years in the state assembly. His enacted legislation included a bill expanding California's paid family leave benefits and another creating a loan program for small businesses to become compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

After Becerra announced that he would leave the House, the expected favorite to succeed him, former state Assembly Speaker John Perez, entered the race but dropped out a week later due to health issues.

Gomez, who was considered the establishment candidate, consolidated support from the state Democratic Party, labor unions and Becerra. His former state Assembly district overlaps with much of the 34th, giving him a natural name-recognition boost.

Twenty-three candidates entered the race, 19 of them Democrats, ranging from the establishment wing to backers of Bernie Sanders.

Gomez and Robert Lee Ahn, a Democratic lawyer and former appointed member of the Los Angeles City Planning Commission, earned 25 percent and 22 percent respectively in the April 4 first round and moved to the June 6 top-two runoff.

Gomez won the runoff with 59 percent of the vote.

Rep. Paul Gosar (R-Ariz.)

4th District, West and central -- Lake Havasu City, Prescott

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

As chairman of the 69-member Congressional Western Caucus and chairman of the Natural Resources subcommittee on energy and mineral resources, Gosar is a leader in Republican efforts to reduce federal agencies' control over how states in the West use their copper, coal, oil, and other assets.



Since so much of the land in the states west of the Mississippi River is owned the federal government, Gosar's to-do list will never be short.

The Western Caucus includes a few members from east of the Mississippi and has one Democrat, Oregon's Kurt Schrader.

Gosar (go-SAR) said one priority for the caucus will be legislation to limit a president's ability to use the Antiquities Act -- signed into law by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1906 -- to designate vast areas of land as national monuments. A monument designation can stop or limit activities such as mining and grazing.

Gosar and his Western Caucus colleagues argue that President Barack Obama abused the Antiquities Act by designating areas such as the 1.3 million acre Bears Ears National Monument in Utah without adequate consultation with, and deference to, local officials and residents.

Obama established 29 national monuments, the most by any president since the law was enacted.

"We're not talking about thousands of acres or a couple of hundred acres, like the Antiquities Act was intended [to be used]. We've seen applications to withdraw 1.7 million acres in the Grand Canyon and over two million potentially in the Sonoran [Desert]. That's irresponsible," Gosar said.

Gosar is particularly interested in promoting solar energy projects on federal lands.

"We don't have a lot of oil and gas" in Arizona, he noted. "But we are truly the Sunshine State, not Florida. We should be Number One in solar." He has co-sponsored legislation with Democrats Jared Polis of Colorado and Mike Thompson of California and fellow Arizona Republican Trent Franks to streamline the permitting process for solar, wind and geothermal development on federal lands.

Gosar keeps his eyes open for what he regards as needless spending by the federal government, even if the amount might seem small to some people. He took issue with the \$50,000 which the Architect of the Capitol spent to put a fabric screen called a "scrim" in front of the Supreme Court building while it was being repaired in 2012 and 2013. The scrim was decorated with an image of the court building. Gosar worked to insert provisions in legislative branch appropriations bills to ensure that no scrims would be paid for on future federal building repair projects.

A member of the hard-line conservative House Freedom Caucus, Gosar favors market-based health care proposals that would, in theory, incorporate more patient responsibility and patient choice. He has celiac disease, and "if I don't take care of myself, you shouldn't have to share that," he said. "It's my burden."

In March 2017, the House passed his bill to end the exemption from antitrust laws that had been given to health insurance companies by the 1945 McCarran-Ferguson Act.

Gosar explained that Congress had given medical insurers the antitrust exemption in 1945 to assist what was a newly developing industry so that companies could set sustainable premiums by permitting data sharing among them.

But he said the exemption had become antiquated and that health insurance "has devolved into one of the least transparent and most anticompetitive industries in the United States." Once Congress scraps the antitrust exemption, Gosar said, the federal government ought to vigorously enforce antitrust laws against health insurance companies.

Gosar was unyielding in his opposition to the American Health Care Act, the GOP leadership's legislation in 2017 to replace the President Barack Obama's 2010 health care law.

He explained in an opinion piece in The Prescott Daily Courier, a newspaper in his district, that the bill “left in place too many of the big-government Obamacare mandates and regulations that are responsible for the rising cost of premiums and limited competition.”

He went so far as to vote against the rule to bring the bill to the floor. A vote on a rule is usually a party-line vote. Gosar joined five other Republicans to vote against the rule. House Speaker Paul D. Ryan pulled the bill from consideration shortly before a scheduled floor vote.

Gosar worries that the federal government at times intrudes on citizens’ privacy. In March 2017 he urged the Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee to continue a ban on funding the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s National Roadside Survey in which drivers were asked to give a saliva sample or cheek swab.

“Civil libertarians have raised legitimate concerns about the unconstitutionality of this program. Put simply, this survey looks like and acts like a police checkpoint and uses uniformed officers to pull cars over,” he told the subcommittee.

Although he’s an advocate of limited government, Gosar joined Democrats Brad Schneider of Illinois and Donald S. Beyer Jr. of Virginia to sponsor a bill in 2017 to extend to the parents of a child who has died the 12 weeks of unpaid leave which the Family and Medical Leave Act requires employers to give to the parents of newborns and to those caring for a seriously ill child, spouse, or parent.

Gosar cites as one of his most significant accomplishments the House passing his bill to allow the Resolution Copper Co. to swap some of its land holdings for federal land near Superior, which could become the largest copper mine in the country. Gosar’s Arizona Democratic colleagues Raul Grijalva and Ruben Gallego opposed the land transfer, arguing that copper mining would destroy lands sacred to Indian tribes. The land transfer became law as a provision included in the defense authorization bill which Obama signed into law in December 2014.

In 2015, Gosar was able to persuade the Fish and Wildlife Service to rescind a decision by one of its regional directors to restrict water-skiing on a section of Lake Havasu within the Havasu National Wildlife Refuge. Gosar’s office worked with local people to persuade the Fish and Wildlife Service that it was misguided to limit use of that section of the lake only to kayakers.

Gosar said the regional director had made an arbitrary decision without providing notice and an opportunity for public comment as required by National Environmental Policy Act. “If you are expected to follow the law, so is the government,” he said.

Gosar was first elected in 2010 in the rural 1st District, which covered most of northeastern Arizona. Redistricting for 2012 made the 1st District more Democrat-friendly so Gosar moved to the more conservative 4th District (which has about 200,000 of his old constituents).

In the primary, the fiscally conservative Club for Growth backed state Sen. Ron Gould, but Gosar still won by almost 20 points. He easily won the general election.

In 2016, Gosar faced a challenger in the Republican primary, Ray Strauss, a pastor and former member of the city council in Buckeye, Ariz. The Arizona Republic newspaper endorsed Strauss, calling him less combative than Gosar.

But Gosar’s popularity in his district was evident both in the primary, which he won with 71 percent, and in the general election, which he won with the same percentage against Democrat Mikel Weissner, a poet and marijuana legalization advocate who had first run against him in 2014.

The oldest of 10 children, Gosar grew up in Wyoming where his father was an energy industry geologist. “I didn’t like rocks when I was a kid. I found them boring. I actually find them liberating now because they tell you a story of the Earth,” Gosar said.

Many Republicans of Gosar’s generation see Ronald Reagan as a hero and role model, but Gosar’s connection is personal. He said that “as a young teeny bopper” in the early 1970s he went with his father to Salt Lake City to a GOP event at which Reagan, who at that point was the governor of California, was the featured speaker. Reagan summoned young Gosar up to the front of the room and interviewed him about his favorite classes, sports, and other topics.

Rep. Mark E. Green (R-Tenn.)

7th District, Western Middle Tennessee -- Clarksville, southern Nashville suburbs

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

A two-term Tennessee state senator, Green believes the federal government has grown too big and says that cutting the federal debt will be his top priority in the House.

Also on his agenda: tax cuts. He's a firm believer in the Laffer Curve, the graphical representation of the economic theory that says the more an activity is taxed, the less of the activity there is.

He says taxes should be cut at all levels of government to let businesses innovate, invest and hire more people.

A conservative Christian, Green sponsored legislation in the state Senate that would allow mental health practitioners to refuse to treat LGBT patients and supported a bill that would require transgender high school and college students to use bathrooms that conform to the gender of their birth.

His stance on immigration is in line with President Donald Trump's. He supports the president's plan to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border and to deploy more border patrol agents.

In the Tennessee Senate, he tried to stop cities in the state from adopting sanctuary policies that bar local police from cooperating with federal immigration agents. He says he wants to require employers to verify that new workers are not unauthorized immigrants.

Green supports gun rights and touts his work in the Tennessee Senate to allow Tennesseans to carry concealed weapons.

He says changes to the health care system must begin with the repeal of the 2010 health care law. He also supports prohibiting abortions after 20 weeks, with exceptions for cases of rape, incest or endangerment of the woman's life.

Green backs an end to federal funding of Planned Parenthood, the women's health care provider that also offers abortions, and would prohibit any requirement that doctors and nurses perform abortions if they have moral objections to doing so.

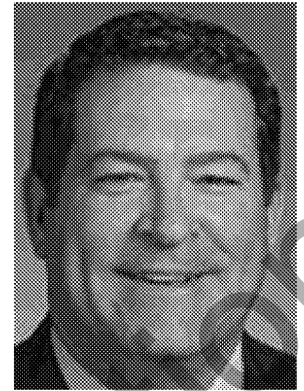
In 2017, Green was Trump's second choice to serve as secretary of the Army after Trump's first pick, Vincent Viola, decided his business entanglements would make winning confirmation too difficult.

But Green withdrew three months later after coming under criticism for his comments deriding gays and lesbians and Islam.

Green had told a tea party group in Chattanooga in 2016 that armed citizens would defend the nation from then-President Barack Obama's effort to encourage public schools to allow transgender students to use the bathroom of their choice. The Education Department had issued guidance instructing school systems to adopt that policy.

He also indicated he thought transgender people suffer from a disease.

At the same meeting, Green had praised an attendee who'd said Muslims "don't belong here" for raising "a great question."



Green said the comments had been mischaracterized. But then-Senate Armed Services Chairman John McCain, an Arizona Republican whose panel would have had to vote on Green's nomination, said he found the comments "very concerning" three days before Green withdrew.

Green had dropped a planned run for governor to pursue the Army post. Having missed that opportunity, he decided to run for the House seat that became available when eight-term GOP Rep. Marsha Blackburn decided to run for Senate.

His state Senate district overlaps the reliably conservative 7th District and he ran unopposed in the GOP primary, and cruised to victory in the general election.

Green grew up in Mississippi. His father, a paper machine foreman, battled cancer and lost an arm. It was Green's talk with a military physician who had cared for his dad that prompted his own desire to go to medical school.

He went to West Point and became an infantry officer. He later took leave to attend medical school at Wright State University in Ohio. He returned to the Army as a flight surgeon and served tours in Afghanistan and Iraq.

He was involved with the mission that captured Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein in 2003 and interviewed the deposed leader. He chronicled the experience in a book, "A Night with Saddam."

Green left the Army in 2006 and started an emergency medicine management and staffing company, as well as a foundation that sends doctors to treat children in developing countries.

He said he decided to get into politics when he saw a statue of Army Gen. Douglas MacArthur at his 25th West Point reunion in 2011 and was moved by the MacArthur quotation on it: "Duty, honor, country — those three hallowed words reverently dictate what you can be, what you ought to be, what you will be."

He ran for the state Senate the following year.

Green says he has no plans to be a career politician, at least in Washington. He promised to serve no more than three terms in the House.

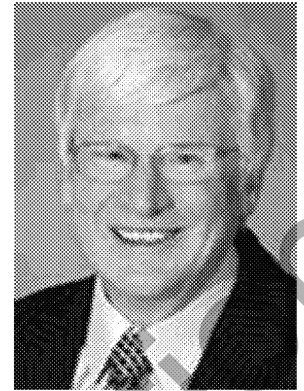
Rep. Glenn Grothman (R-Wis.)

6th District, East central -- Oshkosh, Sheboygan, Fond du Lac

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

Grothman is a veteran of the Wisconsin legislature who first came to the House in 2015 and is decidedly more conservative and outspoken than the moderate Republican whom he succeeded, Tom Petri.



Grothman says his district has more manufacturing jobs than any other in the nation. But he often discusses his deep concern that too many Americans have simply left the labor force and that employers cannot find enough workers to fill their vacancies.

Like many Republicans, he argues that the U.S. economy isn't growing fast enough, and he blames, among other factors, the costs to employers of defending against litigation and complying with government regulations.

At a hearing of the Education and the Workforce Committee to discuss a National Labor Relations Board ruling that affects people who work for two or more different employers, Grothman said, "You wonder why our standard of living isn't higher. You've got this huge albatross, this sea of lawyers out there that our society has to pay for."

In one example of his interest in encouraging people to join the workforce, Grothman introduced a bill in 2017 that would eliminate the authority of the agriculture secretary to grant waivers from work requirements for non-disabled working age adults with no dependents who are receiving food stamp benefits.

"I believe we should provide assistance to those who have fallen on hard times, but these work requirement waivers are part of an unfortunate trend of government laws and regulations that create disincentives for individuals to work," he said.

Grothman is also a harsh critic of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), which provides a subsidy to low-wage workers. For tax returns filed in 2015, \$68.3 billion in EITC money was claimed by 28.5 million tax filers.

At a Budget Committee hearing in 2017 at which Comptroller General Gene L. Dodaro reported that 24 percent of EITC spending erroneously goes to people not eligible for the credit, Grothman suggested that the figure might be even higher if the federal government checked EITC recipients more thoroughly.

"I hear so much evidence especially from kind of the more liberal people in my district who maybe administer the low-income housing, that this is a broken program," he told Dodaro.

Grothman also is skeptical about the case for more public spending on education and about the value of a four-year college or university degree, especially when it doesn't lead to paid employment.

He said he thinks about people making ill-advised education choices "as I tour my trade schools and see people want to be a carpenter's apprentice when they're 28, after they realize their college degree was a waste. Or tech schools and people come back and they're welders when their 33 because their college degree was a waste."

Grothman has also suggested that it's unfair for middle-income people to be taxed so that money can be given in the form of Pell grants to college students from low-income families, even as students from middle-income families must take out loans to pay for college.

"I know in many ways in this country we hate the middle class. You know, we love the rich, we love the poor, and we hate the middle class," he said at a Higher Education and Workforce Development Subcommittee

hearing in 2017. He also contended that low-income students sometimes use their Pell grant money "for goodies and electronics," which he said causes resentment among middle-income people.

Grothman also cites disability benefits as one reason people are leaving the workforce.

"As I tour my district, be it manufacturing or be it in other things, the number one thing that seems to be holding my businesses back is they can't find people to work... They really have a hard time finding people to work out there. And I am trying to think what we can do to find more people to fill those jobs so our economy can grow," he said.

He said the growth in the number of Americans in recent years who get from benefits the Social Security Disability Insurance program is odd considering that "over time, our farms, certainly our manufacturers have gotten safer and safer. So normally, common sense would say given how much safer things are going, you will figure the number of people on SSDI is dropping."

"I realize there are people who are genuinely disabled and need the help," he said, "but if we were a little bit more careful, maybe we would be able to jumpstart the economy" as these would be people who could fill job openings.

When C-SPAN asked Grothman about his summer reading in 2016, he cited George Gilder's book *The Scandal of Money: Why Wall Street Recovers but the Economy Never Does*, which he praised for explaining how "the Federal Reserve is making the wealthier people better off, but the policies over the last six years in particular have kind of hurt the average guy. That's why we have the stock market boom, but the average guy doesn't seem to be making that much more money...."

During 20 years in the Wisconsin legislature, Grothman rose to leadership, serving as assistant Republican leader in the senate from 2009 to 2014. Along the way, he demonstrated a penchant for being provocative.

When labor union activists challenged Republican Gov. Scott Walker's administration in 2011, Grothman described them as "a bunch of slob" in an interview with MSNBC. He dismissed the protesters as "college students and hangers-on having a party."

He came to Congress with a weighty state legislative background, having been in the Wisconsin state Assembly for a decade and then in the state Senate for another 10 years.

He said he's proud of the legislation he helped pass in Wisconsin that largely exempts manufacturing and farming from the state income tax through a credit that applies to production income. Another of his achievements, he said, was a bill requiring a 24-hour waiting period for abortions.

Grothman worked for a decade as a lawyer specializing in probate, estate planning, real estate and taxes before making his first run for office. But he was interested in politics and volunteered in campaigns.

After earning a bachelor's degree in business administration with a major in accounting from the University of Wisconsin at Madison, he went on to get a law degree at the same institution.

Grothman won his House seat in 2014 by defeating Democrat Mark Harris by 15 points. In 2016, Grothman won a second term with 57 percent, defeating Democrat Sarah Lloyd, a farmer and agriculture policy specialist for the Wisconsin Farmers Union.

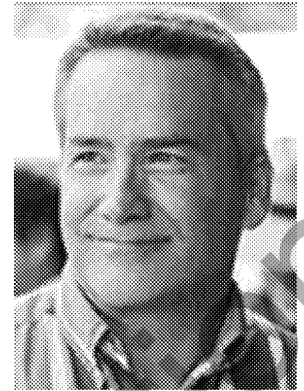
Rep. Jody B. Hice (R-Ga.)

10th District, Eastern piedmont -- Athens

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

From a conservative rural-exurban district in Georgia, Hice is one of a cadre of staunch limited-government members whom voters sent to the House in the 2014 Republican sweep.



By one measure -- the vote scorecard of Heritage Action, a leading right-of-center advocacy group -- Hice is the most conservative member of the Georgia congressional delegation, with a near-perfect 91 percent score as of August 2017.

He looks for ways to save the taxpayers money and has focused his attention on the millions the federal government spends to support former presidents.

Ex-presidents currently get a pension that is equal to what cabinet secretaries are paid which in 2016 was \$205,700.

Hice's bill would give each ex-president an annuity of \$200,000 a year and office funds of \$500,000 annually for five years following the bill's enactment, an amount that would gradually decline.

But for every dollar an ex-president earned over \$400,000, he would get a dollar less in pension and office allowance. (According to the New York Times, former President Barack Obama has earned as much as \$400,000 per speech since leaving office.)

"It is a pretty high threshold. Right now we've got (former) presidents making tens and tens of millions of dollars on book deals and speaking engagements. There's no point for the taxpayer to be paying all that excess in addition to what they're making," Hice said.

The Oversight and Government Reform Committee approved Hice's bill by voice vote in September of 2017.

Hice also wants to rein in union activity by federal employees who are designated as union representatives and who spend their time dealing with matters such as working conditions at federal offices.

In 2015, Hice introduced a bill to restrict the use of federal employees' work hours for collective bargaining and other union activities. It would exclude certain amounts of such time from the calculation of an employee's federal service for pension purposes.

Hice offered a version of the legislation as an amendment to the fiscal 2016 appropriations bill for military construction and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The amendment was rejected, but he tried again in 2017 and his bill was OK'd by the Oversight and Government Reform Committee on a party-line vote of 18-11, with 13 members not voting.

Massachusetts Democrat Stephen F. Lynch, who is a former union local president, argued during the committee markup of Hice's legislation that it would undercut the right of workers who are union members to bargain collectively.

But Hice said, "Right now, we have folks hired to do a job with whatever [federal] agency they are hired to do that job. And instead of doing the job they were hired to do, many are doing 100 percent of their time doing union activity. So our bill says if you are doing 80 percent [of your time] doing union activity, then you lose

your pension for that year." Referring to the 80 percent threshold, Hice said, "You can't get much more generous than that."

Hice is the chairman of the Oversight and Government Reform Government Operations Subcommittee. He used the panel to focus attention on the surge of illicit opioid drugs flowing into the United States from China through the U.S. Postal Service.

"Americans are now able to easily purchase powerful synthetic opioids, particularly from China, and have them shipped straight to their doorstep here in the United States via the United States Postal Service," he said.

The hearing highlighted the fact that the Postal Service is required by treaty established by the Universal Postal Union to accept mail that is shipped to the United States from China and other foreign countries; in contrast, private-sector delivery companies such as FedEx can refuse customers if they want.

Hice said after the hearing that he's still working on possible strategies to deal with the flow of drugs delivered from China.

A pastor who hosted a conservative talk radio show, Hice became locally famous during a "pulpit-freedom" event in 2008, supporting the right of religious leaders to endorse political candidates without losing their organizations' tax-exempt status.

Before that, he'd fought against removal of a Ten Commandments display from a county courthouse.

Hice has expressed pungent views on gay rights and on Islam. In a 2012 book, he wrote that "the homosexual movement is also destroying America by aggressively seeking to destroy traditional families, religion and marriages for the purpose of removing all societal moral boundaries." He said Islam is not just a religion, but a "geopolitical structure" that doesn't warrant protection under the First Amendment.

Hice grew up in the Atlanta suburb of Tucker. He earned bachelor's, master's and doctorate degrees in theology and divinity and worked in Georgia churches for nearly 25 years.

Hice gained notoriety in 2003 after setting up an organization to pay for the legal defense of Georgia's Barrow County after the American Civil Liberties Union sued its board of commissioners for displaying the Ten Commandments in front of the courthouse. Georgia law now allows the text to be posted in all state public buildings.

In 2008, Hice made headlines for joining a group of pastors who opposed an IRS policy allowing regulators to yank churches' tax-exempt status if preachers endorsed particular politicians or positions during services. Hice endorsed Sen. John McCain for president and took the extra step of notifying the tax agency, which never responded.

In 2016, Hice endorsed Texas Sen. Ted Cruz for the Republican presidential nomination and was the co-chairman of Cruz's campaign in Georgia.

Hice won the seat previously held by Republican Paul Broun, one of the most conservative members of the House who ran for the Senate in 2014 but lost in the primary, which was ultimately won by David Perdue, who was elected in November.

Broun endorsed Hice after his loss, and Hice went on to win more than two-thirds of the vote in 2014.

This district is not fertile territory for Democratic candidates and shows no signs of becoming so. Hice faced no Democratic opponent on the 2016 ballot.

Rep. Clay Higgins (R-La.)

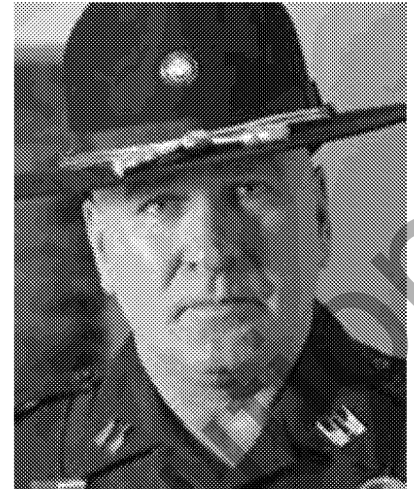
3rd District, Southwest coast; Lafayette, Lake Charles

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

Higgins is a populist with a theatrical flair.

Appointed spokesman for the St. Landry Parish sheriff's office in 2014, Higgins made his reputation as a charismatic tough guy with "Crime Stoppers" videos on a local television station.



Millions of people watched him on YouTube and his fame reached the NBC Tonight show in 2015 when host Jimmy Fallon showed a Crime Stoppers clip in which Higgins promised a robbery suspect who was on the loose that once he was arrested, "your next meal will be served through a small hole in a cell door." Fallon gleefully asked, "I have a question – can that guy run for president?"

Higgins worked for several years as a car dealer before becoming a police officer. He resigned from the St. Landry Parish sheriff's office in February 2016 in a dispute with his boss, Sheriff Bobby Guidroz, who said he'd told Higgins to "tone down" some of his Crime Stoppers comments.

Guidroz also said Higgins had appeared on the cover of a local magazine in uniform without his approval and that Higgins "formed a personal business venture to raise money by selling mugs, t-shirts and other trinkets using department badge and uniform."

At the press conference announcing his candidacy, Higgins emphasized his blue-collar roots.

"The House of Representatives was envisioned to be a place where regular folk, Americans, served," he said. "Your merchants and farmers and your ranchers and your hunters and trappers, and regular Americans like me. The Senate – it's more erudite, I may have to get eight or 10 more brain cells to be a senator."

He said "I'm not running for office. I'm descending into the belly of the beast, the Leviathan of Biblical proportions that has become our federal government."

He expressed his disdain for professional politicians. "They breed these guys in laboratory experiments or something," he scoffed at his campaign-launching press conference. "They grow up in a Petri dish with gated communities and private schools. Nothing wrong with that, but don't tell me that career politicians are connected with America. These guys don't understand what it is to look in the refrigerator and wonder how you're going to feed your children."

He struck that same note in an interview with Lafayette, La., television station KATC shortly before he won the Dec. 10 runoff election over Democrat turned Republican Scott Angelle, "I know what it feels like to see an eviction notice on my door. I can relate to the struggles of regular American people."

Higgins lives just outside the 3rd Congressional District in the town of Port Barre, which is in the 5th Congressional District. But he told KATC, "I'm associated culturally and by heritage with the 3rd District."

Higgins vowed that he would work in Congress to ensure that money in the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund is used as Congress intended to keep access open to the Port of Lake Charles via the Calcasieu Ship Channel.

Calling the port "the single most significant economic entity in the 3rd District," Higgins said it was "sickening to me" that "we have to beg our imperialist federal government" for the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund money and pledged that if elected he'd be "a very, very loud proponent for the Port of Lake Charles."

He serves on the Homeland Security, Science, Space & Technology and Veterans' Affairs committees.

On social issues, Higgins is a staunch conservative. He says abortion is murder. He described on his campaign web site the experience that confirmed his anti-abortion views: "I lost a daughter many years ago. She was 6 months and 10 days old. I think of her, and her little hand gripping my finger. I cannot imagine the mindset of any person who would support the murder of such an innocent child of God."

He added that if a pregnant woman's life "is TRULY at risk" from carrying her child to term, "then that mother would have to choose whether or not she was willing to risk death for the life of her child, and such a choice should be legal and left up to the mother."

He also wants to restore the states' rights to regulate marriage and believes that the Supreme Court's 2015 Oberkfell decision which forced states to grant legal recognition to same-sex marriages was wrongly decided.

Higgins said on his web site that he supports every American's right "to pursue happiness as they see fit regarding the choice of whom they love. I have one very good gay friend, he lives in Nevada. If he decides to get married, within the legal parameters of his State, and if he invites me to the wedding, I'll attend if I am able."

Despite his tough approach to crime, he advocates ridding the nation's prisons of gangs, rapes, and beatings. "We will never fix crime in America until we've addressed as a nation the disgraceful horror we have allowed our Penitentiary system to become," he says.

Higgins's views on foreign policy are eclectic. He said on his web site, "Iran is a country of oppressed citizens who long for freedom from a regime of religious zealots who govern in the most horrific manner imaginable. The radical Islamic governing authority in Iran is our enemy. The Iranian people are not."

Russia, he said, is a country that should be handled "as carefully and with the respect that one would handle a viper." But he also sees Russia as an ally of the United States. "The Russian citizenry is primarily Christian and as a people, historically proud and very tough. Russia is a respected ally to America... but an ally to be handled with caution."

Higgins finished second to Angelle in the 12-candidate primary on Nov. 8. Angelle had 30 years of experience in local and state government and had run for governor as a Republican in 2015, finishing third in the primary, behind Democrat John Bel Edwards and Republican David Vitter.

The day after the primary election, Higgins's ex-wife filed a suit against him claiming that he had failed to pay \$100,000 in child support. Higgins said it was "a reasonable conclusion" that the Angelle campaign had a role in the timing of the suit, an assertion Angelle dismissed as "comical." But Angelle repeatedly brought up the child support issue during their final television debate before the Dec. 10 runoff.

Higgins told KATC that he had not shirked his child support payments. "It's a complex legal matter," he added. Higgins won the runoff with 56 percent of the vote.

Rep. Katie Hill (D-Calif.)

25th District, Northern Los Angeles County -- Santa Clarita, Palmdale, most of Simi Valley

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

Hill's win would seem to represent another nail in the coffin of the California Republican Party.



She defeated Steve Knight, the second-term representative, in a district north of Los Angeles once considered safe GOP territory. But in 2016 voters there preferred Hillary Clinton over Donald Trump by a margin of 7 percentage points, making Knight a prime Democratic target this year.

Shortly after launching her campaign in the spring of 2017, Hill confronted Knight at a town hall meeting, pressing him on how he could support GOP efforts to repeal and replace the 2010 health care law.

Universal health care and improved mental health and addiction treatment are at the forefront of Hill's platform. "I've worked on the Medicaid expansion that brought coverage to 13.5 million Californians and I will use that experience to get us to a system we can all afford," she said on her campaign website, referencing a provision of the 2010 law.

Hill's agenda also stems from her time leading the service organization People Assisting the Homeless. There, she was disturbed to see veterans living on the streets. "I know that it is imperative that our troops receive the proper mental health and substance abuse disorder treatment when returning from service," she said.

Hill also supports overhauling the criminal justice system, a bipartisan effort in Congress that has stalled since Trump's tough-on-crime campaign. "Too many people are stuck, unable to move into the middle class, because of a failed criminal justice system that disproportionately impacts people of color, poor people, those who have suffered from addiction or mental health disorders, and those who have simply made mistakes. We need a system that focuses on rehabilitation and provides people who have served their time with the opportunity to become self-sufficient, contributing members of society again," she said.

Hill says she benefited from a strong public school system and supports universal pre-school. "Education is the pathway to self-sufficiency in America. The federal government has to fully fund the education mandates they set at the national level and we ultimately have to protect our public schools from privatization," she said.

Hill is the second openly bisexual person elected to Congress, following Democratic Rep. Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona.

She lives with her husband on a farm in Agua Dulce, 40 miles north of Los Angeles. They keep rescue animals, including a horse, four dogs, chickens and goats.

The daughter of an emergency room nurse and Beverly Hills police officer, she says she spent a lot of time at her grandfather's house as a child. She credits him, Blair Campbell, a political science professor at UCLA before his death in 2011, for the foundation of her beliefs. "Before bed, when other kids heard fairy tales, he would tell us about the American founding fathers and the beginning of democracy," she told Elle in June. "Having this ideal as a child and then watching how it's devolved over the past several years – it's really affected me," Hill said about why she decided to run for Congress.

She started at California State University, Northridge as a nursing major, but after an emotional night in the ER with a young gunshot victim, Hill said she realized that a lot of the reasons people end up in the ER are not medical, and changed her major to English in the hopes of being a teacher for at-risk youth.

That led to a part-time position with the Los Angeles Conservation Corps and ultimately to People Assisting the Homeless.

She started there in 2010 as a development coordinator before rising to executive director in 2016. She said her time working with the homeless gave her an opportunity to advocate, develop policy and coordinate funding.

Hill spent 2016 focused on promoting Prop HHH, a ballot initiative to raise property taxes in Los Angeles to fund housing units for the homeless. "I was obviously thinking about the national election, but I was really giving all of my time and energy to this local initiative," she said. "It passed with almost 80 percent of the vote, which no one expected."

In 2017, Hill worked to pass Measure H, which increased sales taxes in Los Angeles County to pay for countywide homelessness prevention efforts and services and emergency shelters while the Prop HHH housing are being built.

After getting Measure H passed, Hill announced her run for Congress.

In the jungle primary in July, in which the top two candidates of either party advance, Hill took 20 percent of the vote to advance to the general. Knight took just over 50 percent in the primary, but Democrats were more motivated to turn out on Election Day.

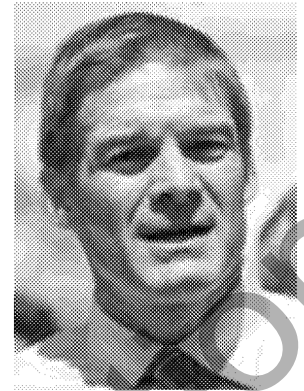
Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Ohio)

4th District, North and west central --Elyria, Lima

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

Jordan is a respected figure among House conservatives and a vexing figure to many people outside of that group. He has a steadfast commitment to his political and policy positions and doesn't shy from confrontations with either the executive branch or Republican leaders.



With other conservative renegades in 2015 Jordan helped start the secretive House Freedom Caucus, which is to the right of the already deeply conservative Republican Study Committee, which Jordan chaired in the 112th Congress (2011-12).

Jordan shows his commitment to his policy ideals and his district by holding firm to what he believes in and not bowing to party leaders. In April 2016, Rep. Jason Chaffetz of Utah decided to leave Congress, creating an opening for the chairmanship of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee. Jordan mulled a run for the top spot but decided against it due to his conflicts with party leaders, acknowledging he would be a long shot with the House Republican Steering Committee.

Even though he decided against running for the job, Jordan chairs the Subcommittee on Health Care, Benefits and Administrative Rules and sits on the Judiciary Committee.

Jordan has been using his committee assignments to work on education and health issues. At a subcommittee hearing, he went after improper loan payments made by the Department of Education's Federal Student Aid Office as their own inspector general found they failed to comply with multiple laws. Chairing a separate hearing, he called upon colleges to do more to protect first amendment rights of free speech saying, "Restricting speech that does not conform to popular opinion contradicts the First Amendment's principles and the right to speak freely." Jordan linked this to the IRS targeting of conservatives who opposed the Affordable Care Act.

Jordan thinks that there is an attack on First Amendment rights on college campuses. With protests on the University of California at Berkeley campus in early 2017, students forced the cancellation of appearances by conservatives such as Ann Coulter and Milo Yiannopoulos. Jordan says that colleges no longer are leaders in free speech.

He is a leading figure in the debate over health care and wants the complete repeal of the 2010 health care law. Though he would like to see a complete repeal, he voted for the Republican substitute plan sponsors called the American Health Care Act. "While it is not full repeal," he said in a statement, "it is a crucial first step to fulfilling that promise to repeal and replace Obamacare." Though the House passed the bill in early May, Republican leaders could not marshal the votes needed in the Senate.

In an interview, Jordan said that Congress "needs to do what we told voters we would do."

On taxes, this means making the tax code simple, Jordan said. On the corporate side it needs to be conducive to economic growth which includes slashing the corporate tax rate among other items. He thinks that Congress should "forget revenue neutrality" as it is a bad deal for the middle class because it just shift the tax burden around. Jordan says Americans know how to spend their own money and that Congress should keep taxes low.

Jordan has a background in farming and agricultural policy is important to him. Policies should be enacted that provide an open playing field, he says, so farmers can better compete.

Food stamps are another area of concern for Jordan. Cutting the work requirement for recipients of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) greatly increased the number of people in the program, Jordan contends. SNAP offers nutrition assistance to millions of low-income individuals and families providing economic benefits to communities as is a domestic hunger safety net. Jordan said that the right incentives need to be put in place. He said that when Maine reinstituted work requirements, people actually went out and got jobs and the number of people on SNAP in Maine was reduced. He thinks Maine's work requirements could be a model for the rest of the country.

Jordan's conservatism has been validated by several leading organizations on the right. He has a perfect lifetime rating from the American Conservative Union, and a near-perfect rating from the Club for Growth. His House office is one of the thriftiest on Capitol Hill, spending less on operations than almost any other office. He is also firmly to the right on social issues - he introduced a bill to extend 14th Amendment rights to "each born and preborn human."

Jordan grew up in the rural community of St. Paris, about an hour west of Columbus. His father worked at the local General Motors plant from his teens until he retired. His mother, who cared for Jordan and two younger siblings, supplemented the family income by running a cleaning business.

In junior high, Jordan took an interest in wrestling, influenced by relatives who were amateur wrestlers; the family home even had a practice room. While winning state championships at Graham High School, he lost only one match. That record led to a scholarship at Wisconsin. (He was inducted into the University of Wisconsin Athletic Hall of Fame in 2005.) Between his junior and senior years, Jordan married his high school sweetheart.

He returned to Ohio and took a job as an assistant wrestling coach at Ohio State. Since the school would pick up some of the tuition, he also knocked out a master's degree. Jordan remembers Ohio Secretary of State Sherrod Brown doing a presentation for a class in state politics - College Republicans were tearing into him, and Brown was "as smooth as ever." Brown is now Ohio's senior senator.

Jordan's wife had just given birth to their fourth child in 1994 when he decided to get into the contest to succeed a longtime GOP incumbent in the state House. He attended Capital University while serving in the legislature and earned a law degree in 2001.

When Republican Rep. Michael G. Oxley announced his retirement in 2006, Jordan was part of a six-candidate Republican field hoping to succeed him. He took more than 50 percent of the primary vote.

In November, he cruised to victory over Democratic lawyer Richard E. Siferd. The strong GOP tilt of his district helped him easily win re-election in 2008, even as Democrats were surging nationally. After redistricting, he still won by wide margins.

Rep. Robin Kelly (D-Ill.)

2nd District, Chicago -- far South Side; Chicago Heights; south Chicago exurbs

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

Kelly's roots in her district, which covers Chicago's South Side, and her background in public service frame her legislative record in Congress, where she has largely focused on gun control, health care and community development.



She brought with her a career working in the public sector in elected office and behind the scenes, as a social worker, the chief of staff in a state-level cabinet office, the lead administrative officer for Cook County and a member of the Illinois House.

Just as valuable are her connections throughout the Chicago-area Democratic Party -- President Barack Obama was a guest at her wedding. But the liberal Kelly points out that the people she knew best as a newcomer to Washington were Republicans: Rep. Randy Hultgren and former Rep. Aaron Schock were colleagues back in her state House days.

Kelly represents the district with the state's highest percentage of black residents, and alongside Reps. Yvette D. Clarke and Bonnie Watson Coleman, she co-created the Congressional Caucus on Black Women and Girls. In the Congressional Black Caucus, she chairs the Health Braintrust. Kelly released a report in 2015 supporting greater public health infrastructure to address the gap in health care for minorities. "We find ourselves at a crossroads in healthcare," she wrote in her report. "Health disparities in communities of color continue to be intractable hurdles in the quest to achieve health equity in America."

Kelly has a seat on the wide-ranging Oversight and Government Reform Committee, including ranking member of the Information subcommittee, and another on the Foreign Affairs Committee, where she is on the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere and the Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia and Emerging Threats.

She has laid down a few markers on gun violence, which plagues some of the South Side neighborhoods in her district. One Kelly bill would allow the Consumer Product Safety Commission to issue safety standards for pistols, revolvers and other firearms that are excluded as "consumer products" under federal law. Another would prohibit the sale or distribution of guns or ammunition to individuals who have been convicted of a violent crime within 10 years, individuals convicted of stalking, or individuals under 25 who have committed what would have been a violent crime, if they had been tried as adults.

She protested on the House floor in June 2016 with Democrats who held a sit-in in an attempt to force a vote on gun legislation. "We will not sit in silence as people are killed every day on the streets of Chicago," she said in a statement. "We will not look the other way and ignore the loopholes that allow guns to end up in the wrong hands."

Urban centers are not getting enough attention when it comes to gun violence, with Congress and the media focusing on mass shootings, she said. "I liken it to when a 747 crashes as opposed to a two-seater," she said. "I think that's what gets the attention. Not the ... mini-massacres or the every-weekend shootings."

Kelly also regularly engages with employment issues. She has championed two pieces of legislation with Illinois Sen. Richard J. Durbin, one which would support two tax credits for businesses to hire young adults who are out of school, particularly during summer breaks. Another would make it easier for community organizations to apply for federal funding for youth employment programs.

She introduced a bill in February 2017 that tackles several parts of community development through training programs - offering tax credits for businesses to hire for internships and apprenticeships, creating job training programs and recruiting STEM teachers.

The bipartisan education bill to replace the No Child Left Behind Act included an amendment proposed by Kelly that requires family engagement centers detailed in the legislation to offer adult literacy programs, including some on financial literacy.

Considering her district, Kelly professes to have an interest in both farm policy (the southern reaches extend to rural areas well outside Chicago) and transportation policy. She supports the development of a new south suburban airport. She'd also like to see a new east-west Illiana Expressway to ease commute times in the region.

Kelly came to Illinois via New York City, where she was born and raised. Her father owned a grocery store, and her mother was a postal worker. A recruiter for Bradley University in Peoria got Kelly on the hook, in part by billing that city as a large metropolis halfway between Chicago and St. Louis. The rural landscape was a surprise. "Nothing against Peoria, because a lot of good things have happened to me," she said. "It was a culture shock."

Kelly earned a master's degree in counseling and spent several years as a social worker, which included a stint as the director of a youth shelter. She eventually moved to Matteson, a Chicago suburb. She was the director of community affairs for the village for 10 years, and, among other projects, she oversaw a well-publicized community project studying racial integration. That effort became the basis for her doctoral thesis - she has a Ph.D. in political science.

She won election to the state House in 2002 and served two terms before becoming the chief of staff to Illinois Treasurer Alexi Giannoulias. Both she and her boss had a rough year in 2010. He lost a U.S. Senate race to Republican Mark S. Kirk, and she lost her bid to become the state treasurer herself. In 2011, she was appointed the chief administrative officer of Cook County, a position that put her in charge of many nuts-and-bolts functions for an area that includes a huge chunk of the state's population.

Kelly's predecessor in the House, Jesse L. Jackson Jr., resigned two weeks after winning a seat in the 113th Congress (2013-14) while he was under investigation for misuse of campaign funds. A drove of Democrats entered the February 2013 special-election primary. Kelly's former boss, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, endorsed a more-progressive Democrat, state Sen. Toi Hutchinson.

But Hutchinson dropped out before the primary, leaving Kelly and former Rep. Debbie Halvorson as the two most-prominent Democrats in the race. Kelly benefited from her support of gun control, as a super PAC (associated with New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg) spent more than \$2 million boosting Kelly and attacking Halvorson. Kelly won around half of the vote in the primary, and then more than 70 percent in the general election.

In 2014, she was unopposed in the primary and topped 70 percent in the general election. She easily sailed to re-election in 2016.

Rep. Ro Khanna (D-Calif.)

17th District, South Bay and most of Fremont

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

Khanna's first brush with politics was volunteering for Barack Obama's 1996 Illinois State Senate campaign. He later worked in Obama's Commerce Department and when he decided to run for Congress, he hired experts from Obama's re-election team to help him win a seat.

Silicon Valley voters handed their district to the tech industry darling in a 2016 rematch against fellow Democrat Michael M. Honda, a seven-term lawmaker.

Honda defeated Khanna by only 4,714 votes in 2014, out of more than 134,000 votes cast. Under California's top-two system, the two candidates getting the most primary votes move to the November ballot. This time around, he won by 19 points.

As a lawyer, Khanna specialized in intellectual property practice as a civil servant, he focused on promoting exports. He traveled across the country for two years working to help manufacturers navigate foreign markets.

The deputy assistant secretary at the Commerce Department when he left the Obama administration in 2011, Khanna then worked in part on Obama's re-election campaign and also wrote a book "Entrepreneurial Nation: Why Manufacturing is Still Key to America's Future." The book examines the entrepreneurial culture of modern American manufacturers and the type of innovation that keeps the U.S. competitive.

Khanna credits his maternal grandfather, who was imprisoned during India's independence movement in the 1940s, for his interest in public service.

He bills himself as a "new kind of leader" in touch with the entrepreneurial spirit of his district and says he'll bring to the Capitol economic ideas and vision for advanced manufacturing jobs for the middle class.

He says his district, the only district in the continental U.S. with a majority of Asian heritage, is one of the most consequential districts in the country thanks to technology giants, including Apple Inc., Intel Corp., Cisco Systems Inc., that call it home. But even with big name tech industry executives endorsing him in the race, including Facebook Chief Operating Officer Sheryl Sandberg and Yahoo CEO Marissa Mayer, Khanna pledged to refuse campaign contributions from large special interest contributors, political action committees and lobbyists.

He says he'll focus on economic issues in the House. His top priority is to keep America competitive in the 21st century and lead the global economy in job creation. He sees education as essential to that task.

Khanna says the country's declining investment in education will jeopardize America's global competitiveness. He has outlined a slew of policy positions – many of them conventionally liberal – but he emphasizes the promotion of advanced manufacturing through federal programs and tax code incentives to support the demand for professionals in science, technology, engineering and math fields.

Khanna is serving as one of the eight vice chairman of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, the largest of the House Democratic caucuses.

He serves on the Armed Services and Budget committees.



The Ivy League educated and former intellectual property attorney says he'll work to find a bipartisan compromise to expand the early childhood education Head Start program and universal pre-school as well as making higher education affordable.

His esteem for education was instilled in him by his parents. Khanna credits his mother's work as a public school substitute teacher for his passion for education and influenced his decision to become an educator. He was guest lecturer in Stanford University's economics department for four years. Khanna's bachelor's degree in economics came from the University of Chicago in 1998 and his law degree came from Yale in 2001.

Expanded federal support for research, renewable energy and education programs with a technology and engineering focus also top Khanna's agenda. If those ideas sound familiar, they should: Khanna helped develop the "innovation agenda" touted by Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi (of the nearby 12th District) in the mid-2000s, a period in which he was also a fundraiser and organizer for the Democratic Party .

Khanna's first House campaign was in 2004, when he challenged Democratic Rep. Tom Lantos as an anti-war candidate. He lost that race, but Lantos became his mentor. He raised money for a possible clash with Democratic Rep. Pete Stark in 2012, but demurred. Those funds later seeded his 2014 campaign.

Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-Ill.)

8th District, Northwest Chicago suburbs -- Elgin, Schaumburg

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

If at first you don't get elected try, try again — that was Krishnamoorthi's path to Congress.

The businessman and attorney won the Democratic primary in Illinois's 8th District on March 15 after two previous attempts at elected office. Krishnamoorthi, who will represent a district in the Chicago suburbs, was born in India, origins that remain a rarity in Congress. He joins fellow Democrats Ami Bera, Pramila Jayapal and Ro Khanna as Indian-Americans in the 115th Congress.

"Congress increasingly represents the diversity of America," Krishnamoorthi said in an interview. "Indian Americans are now taking the next step to take part in the American dream."

Krishnamoorthi replaced Democratic Rep. Tammy Duckworth, who gave up her seat to challenge GOP Sen. Mark S. Kirk. His victory makes the 8th District the non-coastal seat held by an Asian American. (Duckworth was born in Thailand.)

Krishnamoorthi and Duckworth ran against each other in the 2012 primary, after Democrats in the state legislature redrew polarizing GOP Rep. Joe Walsh's district to be considerably more Democratic. Duckworth was the establishment choice, after a narrow House loss in 2006 and serving in the veterans affairs departments at the state and federal level. She won the primary by 32 points.

It was his second primary loss before he turned 40, having previously lost a race for state comptroller in 2010 by 1 percentage point.

What did he learn? "Don't run against Tammy Duckworth," Krishnamoorthi joked.

Krishnamoorthi was the candidate to beat when he returned to the campaign trail this cycle. He secured endorsements from Sen. Richard J. Durbin, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, Minority Whip Steny Hoyer, five members of the Illinois delegation, and 10 members from outside the state, including Bera. He also raised over \$1.6 million, considerably more than his opponents.

He won the 2016 primary with 57 percent over state Sen. Mike Noland (29 percent) and Villa Park President Deb Bullwinkel (14 percent).

Krishnamoorthi's road to Congress hasn't been an easy one. His family moved to Buffalo, N.Y., in the mid-1970s. Because of its economic struggles, the family lived for a time in public housing and on food stamps. Krishnamoorthi eventually grew up in Peoria, Ill., where his father became a professor at Bradley University.

"My father found the religion of the United States," the candidate said, talking about the American Dream. "My parents climbed their way to the middle class."

Krishnamoorthi was the product of public schools and went on to earn degrees from Princeton University (in mechanical engineering) and Harvard Law School.

He clerked for a federal judge in Chicago before meeting a then-state senator named Barack Obama.

Krishnamoorthi worked as a low-level staffer on Obama's 2000 primary challenge to Rep. Bobby L. Rush and as issues director for Obama's 2004 campaign for U.S. Senate.



For a decade, Krishnamoorthi held various positions in the Illinois public and private sectors. He was partner at the large law firm Kirkland & Ellis, special assistant attorney general under Democrat Lisa Madigan, and deputy state treasurer. He was most recently president of Sivananthan Laboratories, a high-tech business incubator.

Krishnamoorthi would likely bring a fresh perspective to a Democratic Party that is sometimes viewed as being anti-business. He is likely to be a mainstream Democratic member who may reach across the aisle.

“As a small businessperson, I’ll be able to talk to my colleagues in a real granular way about how hard it is to start and grow a small business,” he said. He favors immediately raising the minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour, or less than some liberal groups would like, while also allowing variations for distinctions between rural and urban areas, where the minimum would need to be higher.

The 8th District includes parts of Cook, DuPage, and Kane counties outside of Chicago and is home to headquarters for Sears, Motorola Solutions, and Zurich North America and just across the district line from McDonald’s corporate offices. Krishnamoorthi lives in Schaumburg, a northwest suburb of Chicago, with his wife — a local doctor — and two young sons.

Even though Krishnamoorthi won the primary election handily, the seat wasn’t handed to him. There were rumblings that he was too wealthy for the blue collar district and EMILY’s List was openly searching for a female candidate to replace Duckworth. But he came to the race with a humility that comes with running (and losing) a couple of races and the experience to know how to build a strong, well-funded operation.

He serves on the Education & the Workforce and Oversight & Government Reform committees.

Rep. Brenda Lawrence (D-Mich.)

14th District, Part of Detroit and northwestern suburbs

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

Lawrence's district is centered in Detroit, but in 2016 she became a crusader for people in another district 60 miles away from her own, where the residents of Flint found out their water supply was contaminated with lead. She used her position on the Oversight and Government Reform Committee to ask for hearings on the Flint water crisis.

During one hearing she grilled Michigan's Republican governor, Rick Snyder, on why he hadn't taken action earlier to ensure a safe water supply for Flint.

In the 115th Congress, Lawrence was named to the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, where she planned to continue to draw attention to Flint and the broader problem of water and sewer systems throughout the United States that need to be repaired and replaced.

If there is a big increase in federal infrastructure spending, she wants to ensure that enough Americans are trained in the skilled trades to work as electricians, carpenters, pipe fitters and other jobs that require training, but not necessarily a college degree.

"I started the skilled trade caucus here in Congress," she said at a Transportation and Infrastructure Committee hearing in early 2017. She is the co-chair of the Skilled American Workforce Caucus, along with Arkansas Republican French Hill.

"The average age of a skilled trade worker is 53 years old and we have pretty much decimated the training and investment in a trained, skilled workforce. We do not have the number of young people entering into the skilled trades [that are needed]," she said.

Closer to home, Lawrence has voiced alarm over raids by Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents in the Detroit area in June 2017, when more than 100 individuals were arrested and placed in detention. She said the raids might result in the removal from the United States of Iraqi nationals including Chaldeans, a Christian sect, and Muslims.

As a young woman, Lawrence worked as a letter carrier and she's one of the most outspoken champions of the Postal Service in Congress.

She supported a bipartisan bill that the Oversight and Government Reform Committee approved in March 2017 aimed at reducing the massive unfunded liabilities of the Postal Service by cutting the cost of retiree benefits. It would set up separate Federal Employees Health Benefits Program plans for postal employees. It also would enroll retired postal workers in Medicare while gradually reducing the portion the Postal Service pays of retiree Medicare premiums.

She was singled out for praise by the then-chairman of the committee, Jason Chaffetz of Utah, who said the bill had "benefited by the expertise of Brenda Lawrence. I want to thank her for her passion and commitment on this. She knows it firsthand and she is a valuable voice in this legislation moving forward."

In her statement supporting the bill, Lawrence said, "As the only Member of Congress with first-hand experience in the Postal Service -- a wide-ranging career spanning over 30 years -- I am passionate about the importance of the Postal Service to this country and the support that it requires."



Foster children are another one of Lawrence's causes. She is co-chair of both the Coalition on Adoption and the Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth. In addition, she chooses interns for her office who have spent time in the foster care system.

"Foster children do not have a family or parent to advocate for them," she told C-SPAN. "I'm going to make a difference for those children and that, for me, is a major sense of accomplishment."

She has introduced legislation to ensure foster children receive mental health screenings and to require that foster children be provided information on government tuition and housing assistance programs for which they could be eligible.

Lawrence's district includes Pontiac, Southfield, Farmington Hills, Grosse Pointe, and part of Detroit, is a mixture of economically distressed city neighborhoods and comfortable wooded suburbs. According to the Census Bureau's 2016 American Community Survey, 56 percent of the population of the district is African-American. The median household income in the district was \$42,695, which was nearly 30 percent lower than the national median household income.

Before winning her seat in the House in 2014, Lawrence made her mark on Michigan politics as the long-serving mayor of Southfield, a diverse Detroit suburb with 71,000 residents. She was the city's first woman mayor and first African-American mayor. Her run for Congress was her fourth attempt at higher office, and she was able to eke out a narrow win over the presumed favorite in the Democratic primary and then cruise to victory in the general election.

The youngest of four children, Lawrence grew up on the northeast side of Detroit in a family short on money and long on strife. After working as a letter carrier, she ended her Postal Service career in 2008 as a human resources investigator.

Lawrence caught the political bug as a member of the PTA at her children's school, and frequently appeared before the local Board of Education. In 1992 she won a seat on the school board in the Detroit suburb of Southfield, and in 1997 a seat on the city council, where she would later rise to president. Then in 2001, she bested the 28-year mayor there and won three subsequent terms.

In 2012, Lawrence was part of a primary scrum that featured two incumbents, then-Rep. Gary Peters and Rep. Hansen Clarke in a newly redrawn 14th District that encompassed Detroit and some of its suburbs.

Lawrence trailed badly in the race, receiving only 13 percent of the vote to Peters' 47 percent.

But by 2014, Peters had decided to run for the Senate seat being vacated by Democrat Carl Levin. Lawrence felt that circumstances were ripe for her to take a fourth shot at higher office and another try for a seat in the House.

In the Democratic primary she faced Clarke and Rudy Hobbs, a state representative. Hobbs was considered the favorite in the race, and outraised Lawrence by a nearly 2-to-1 margin, but Lawrence squeezed by with a four-percentage point victory on the back of labor union endorsements and a solid ground game. She cruised to victory in the general election, defeating Republican Christina Barr.

In 2016, she won 78 percent of the vote, defeating Republican Howard Klausner, an emergency room doctor who struck Trump-like themes, criticizing the North American Free Trade Agreement and assailing Lawrence for supporting the accord with Iran to restrain its nuclear weapons program. In Lawrence's lop-sided Democratic district, Klausner had almost no chance of winning.

Rep. Stephen F. Lynch (D-Mass.)

8th District, Part of Boston; Quincy; Brockton

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

Lynch, a 16-year House veteran, goes his own way on important votes often enough to be a bit of maverick in Democratic ranks.

His most famous divergence from the Democratic leadership came in 2010 when he voted against final passage of President Barack Obama's health insurance overhaul. Of the 34 House Democrats who voted against the bill, Lynch is one of only three still in the House. The others are Daniel Lipinski of Illinois and Collin C. Peterson of Minnesota.

Lynch opposed what became known as Obamacare because it kept an antitrust exemption for health insurance companies and didn't allow states to create their own public insurance options.

A former union local president, Lynch also opposed Obamacare's tax on "Cadillac" high-cost insurance plans. Labor unions often have bargained for such plans in negotiations with management, with workers agreeing to forego some increases in pay in return for more expansive health benefits.

Lynch occasionally breaks with the majority of Democrats on law enforcement and terrorism policy. He's more conservative than many Democrats on issues such as legalizing marijuana.

He noted at an Oversight and Government Reform Committee hearing in 2017, "In my state, by referendum, the citizens of Massachusetts just voted to approve recreational marijuana.... Now, my personal experience has been, well, I'm opposed to that. But we lost decisively on the ballot question. I just cannot see how flooding the streets with another drug is going to help."

By legalizing marijuana, Lynch worried, "society is putting this imprimatur of acceptance and implied suitability."

Like many other House members, Lynch has witnessed the ravages of opioid addiction in his district. "The age at which these young people have been lured into Oxycontin, and then heroin and fentanyl, it's just a horrific situation. And I've got probably 500 -- 500 kids that have died of drug overdose," he said.

Lynch also sometimes stands apart from most Democrats on immigration policy. In 2017, he was one of 24 Democrats to vote for a bill to establish a 10-year maximum sentence for illegal immigrants who reattempt to enter the United States after three or more deportations.

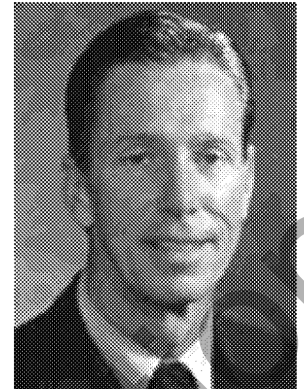
He was one of only seven Democrats to vote for a bill that would prevent the tax credits or subsidies included in the 2010 health care law, or tax credits included in the GOP repeal-and-replace bill, from being handed out until a recipient's legal status could be verified.

Supporters of the bill argued it was necessary to prevent tax credits from going to non-citizens living illegally in the United States.

Lynch, who is the ranking member on the Oversight and Government Reform National Security Subcommittee, has focused on terrorism and the dangers of homegrown jihadism.

He was one of the 47 Democrats who voted in November 2015 for a bill to bar entry into the United States of any refugee from Iraq or Syria until the FBI director and other top security officials could certify that each one was not a threat. Lynch said his vote for the bill was based on his experience traveling to refugee camps and watching the vetting process.

He strongly supports the Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) initiative within the Department of Homeland Security and is especially keen on a pilot program begun in 2014 by the Obama administration in Minneapolis, Los Angeles and Boston designed to use community-based education to stop radicalization of young people.



He noted that the Islamic Center of New England in Quincy in his district has developed a faith-based curriculum to turn young people away from becoming jihadists.

He criticized the Trump administration for proposing to eliminate \$50 million for the CVE program in its fiscal 2018 budget proposal.

But he also acknowledges the difficulties of carrying out the CVE mission. He said he has heard "in various parts of my community and the Muslim community, that those who accept money, CVE money are tainted. There's almost a collaborator label among some that say, 'Oh, that mosque is accepting CVE money. They're cooperating with the FBI or with the Boston police.' ... And others that refuse to take the CVE seek to take on this role of legitimacy in the Muslim community."

On economic and regulatory matters, Lynch votes in line with most Democrats. In June 2017, Lynch, a member of the Financial Services Committee, voted against committee chairman Jeb Hensarling's bill to repeal large parts of the 2010 Dodd-Frank financial overhaul. "I believe it will lead to the next financial crisis," he said. "This is an awful bill. This is a real stinker."

The special-election Democratic primary that propelled Lynch to the House was held on Sept. 11, 2001, and he was more aggressive on defense issues than most Democrats during the George W. Bush administration.

He voted to authorize the Iraq War in 2002 and backed a 2006 Republican resolution supporting Bush's policies there. Over a decade, Lynch visited both Iraq and Afghanistan at least 10 times.

His support for the war in Afghanistan waned, and he supported earlier troop withdrawals.

Lynch's father was an ironworker for 40 years, and his mother was a World War II welder who worked as a post office clerk. Lynch himself was an ironworker for 18 years, and at age 30 he became the youngest president in the history of Ironworkers Local 7.

Lynch earned a law degree from Boston College in his 30s. He joined a law firm and continued representing housing project residents for free, a practice he had begun in law school. Lynch grew up in one of Boston's poorest housing projects.

In 1994, he won a seat in the Massachusetts House. Two years later, he won a special election for a state Senate seat.

Lynch ran in 2001 to succeed Rep. Joe Moakley, a Democrat who died of leukemia. He was boosted by his up-by-the-bootstraps personal story, as well as publicity from his decision to donate 60 percent of his liver to his brother-in-law, who had liver cancer. He won the primary with 39 percent of the vote and cruised after that.

In 2010, Lynch defeated a primary challenge from former Service Employees International Union official Mac D'Alessandro. Referring to his vote against the 2010 health care bill, and how the Democratic leadership responded to it, he recalled, "They ran a candidate against me, to try to take me out." Lynch beat D'Alessandro by 29 points.

In 2018, Lynch will face another primary challenger from the left.

Brianna Wu, a co-founder and chief executive of Giant Spacekat, a video game company, has filed to run against him. Among her criticisms of Lynch: "This man has been on the wrong side of every fight for over a decade. He voted for the Iraq war, and never really answered for it."

Lynch ran in the 2013 special election to fill the Senate seat of Democrat John Kerry, who'd resigned to become secretary of State, finishing second to Rep. Edward J. Markey.

Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney (D-N.Y.)

12th District, East Side of Manhattan; western Queens and northern Brooklyn

Member basics

Politics in America Profile



Whether she's speaking on the House floor in a baby-blue burka, shining a light on the horrific way Afghan women are treated by the Taliban, or fileting disgraced Wells Fargo CEO John Stumpf for defrauding his own customers, Maloney—for a quarter century—has been doggedly pursuing issues and advocating laws she feels passionately about.

Known as a tough crusader for women's rights, Maloney fights for access to women's health needs and reproductive rights in addition to combatting sexual assault and human trafficking. The Democrat from Manhattan holds a black belt in taekwondo.

The former co-chair of the Women's Caucus, Maloney, donned a burka in her October 2001 House floor speech on women's rights in Afghanistan under Taliban rule.

"The veil is so thick that it's difficult to breathe. The little mesh opening for the eyes makes it extremely difficult to even cross the road," she said underscoring the daily struggle of women there.

In a Republican-dominated House, Maloney lacks the voting power to write laws and acts as more of a check on the financial industry. She has been outspoken in her disdain for Financial Services Chairman Jeb Hensarling's "Financial Choice Act," with which the Texas Republican hopes to replace the 2010 Dodd-Frank financial regulatory law. She called Hensarling's bill a "591-page middle finger" that would revert the country's financial oversight practices to the "regulatory Stone Age." She proposed three amendments to the bill, all of which failed. The measure passed the House in June without any Democratic votes.

During Stumpf's testimony before a Financial Services hearing in 2016, Maloney implored him to expand his review of the Wells Fargo scandal. "Will you live up to your commitment of helping your customers that were defrauded, with clear evidence, back to 2007?" she asked, Stumpf obliged.

Much of Maloney's district includes Manhattan, the epicenter of the financial industry, and she is sometimes inclined to make concessions in its favor. In March 2017, she expressed support for a bill proposing to let broker-dealers publish research reports on exchange-traded funds without regulatory penalties. Maloney described it as a "strong bipartisan compromise." The bill passed the House in May.

For the better part of two decades, Maloney has pushed for the establishment of a women's history museum as part of the Smithsonian Institution. In November of 2016, a bipartisan congressional commission that was created from a provision Maloney wrote in a 2014 defense authorization law, recommended the construction of such a museum. Perhaps her most significant legislative action thus far in the 115th Congress has been a bill called the Smithsonian Women's History Museum Act. With 246 co-sponsors it has significant bipartisan support. The project would require between \$150 and \$180 million in private contributions in addition to what monies Congress allocates.

Maloney said earlier in 2017 that she was even more driven to see the museum built after President Donald Trump's victory against Hillary Clinton. "This museum," Maloney said, "will send a clear message to all Americans and to the world that we, as a country, value and appreciate women and their contributions to our great nation."

Maloney herself has made history. She is the first woman to represent New York's 12th Congressional District and the first to chair of the Joint Economic Committee.

Over her career, Maloney has seen 10 pieces of legislation she either wrote or co-wrote, signed into law. In her capacity as chair of the Financial Services Subcommittee on Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit, Maloney's legislation for a bill of rights for credit card holders was signed into law by President Barack Obama in 2009. The bill bans credit card companies from engaging in practices deemed by the Federal Reserve to be unfair, deceptive and in opposition to competition. It ends retroactive rate increases on existing balances and stops double cycle billing, in which interest is charged on money already paid off.

In the 113th Congress (2013-14), Maloney sponsored a bill signed into law that required higher education institutions to both "develop and communicate their policies on dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and domestic violence." Further, it required universities to gather and disclose information about sexual assault as well as expanding and updating campus services.

She sponsored the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act, to provide health care for those exposed to toxins from the collapse of the World Trade Center towers and helped to get additional economic relief to the people harmed by the terrorist attacks. It was signed into law by Obama in January of 2011.

She serves on three committees— ranking Democrat on the Joint Economic Committee and a member of Financial Services and of Oversight and Government Reform. Maloney is the highest ranking Democrat on the Financial Services Subcommittee on Capital Markets, Securities and Investment. She also serves on the Financial Services Subcommittee on Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit along with the Terrorism and Illicit Finance subcommittee. Additionally, she is on the Oversight and Government Reform Subcommittee on Government Operations.

Born on Feb. 19, 1946 in Greensboro, N.C., Maloney graduated from Greensboro College. She went on to work as a teacher and then as a New York City Board of Education administrator for several years. She went to the New York State legislature in 1977 where she held senior staff positions in the Assembly and the Senate. In 1982, Maloney successfully ran for a seat on the New York City Council.

First elected to Congress in 1992, Maloney is in her 13th term and won re-election easily with 83.1 percent of the vote in 2016. She has two adult daughters, Christina and Virginia, and is a widow of her late husband, Clifton Maloney, who died in 2009 after climbing the world's seventh largest peak, Cho Oyu Mountain in China.

Rep. Thomas Massie (R-Ky.)

4th District, North -- Covington, Florence, Ashland

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

Massie, who represents a Kentucky district that stretches for about 200 miles along the Ohio River, is an irrepressibly cheerful gadfly and one of the small band of libertarians in the House.

Among the accomplishments he sees as most significant so far in his House career is getting a provision added to the 2014 farm bill to legalize the growing of industrial hemp. The fiber is used in making ropes and has other manufacturing applications.

Massie partnered with Democrats Jared Polis of Colorado and Earl Blumenauer of Oregon on the industrial hemp effort.

The 2014 bill allows certain research institutions and state departments of agriculture to grow hemp under a pilot program, but Massie said Kentucky growers “have used that narrow path to do quite a bit. We’re still pushing for full, unlimited legalization of industrial hemp.”

Massie says hemp could help replace some of the income that farmers used to earn from raising tobacco.

He also is proud of the role that he played in creating the pressure that led John A. Boehner to step down as Speaker in 2015, saying, “I think John Boehner would still be speaker if I weren’t here.”

He said there were three separate attempts to oust Boehner as speaker, starting in January of 2013, and that he was involved in all three. In 2015, Massie and North Carolina’s Mark Meadows wrote a motion to “vacate the chair” as a way to spur Boehner’s departure. The motion eventually prompted Boehner to resign on Oct. 31, 2015.

Asked whether the House as of mid-2017, under Speaker Paul D. Ryan, was being run in a more open manner than it was under Boehner, Massie replied, “It’s worse now.”

For example, Massie said, he wants to see an open amendment process on appropriations bills.

According to him, Ryan stopped that open amendment process in order to foil the Democrats’ gambit of offering amendments on issues such as displaying Confederate flags in national cemeteries, which would force GOP members to cast politically difficult votes. That, he said, “conveniently shut down the ability of rank-and-file members to get a vote on issues – it was our only outlet.”

On foreign policy, Massie is a non-interventionist. In a speech at the libertarian Mises Institute in Auburn, Ala., Massie cast doubt on the idea that Bashar al-Assad’s regime had used chemical weapons against its own people in April 2017. The chemical weapons attack prompted President Trump to order a Tomahawk cruise missile strike on an air base in Syria.

Massie said a few months later that it was hard to figure out a reason why Assad would attack his own people. The Syrian leader is “not a stupid person and he had to know that any use of chemical weapons would draw us into the war. And that was not to his advantage,” Massie said.

Asked whether he wanted to see Congress vote on an authorization for the use of military force (AUMF) against Syria, Massie replied, “We sure as hell shouldn’t be in Syria unless there’s a vote here in the House of Representatives. We need to have that debate....”

He added, “I’d like to see us get out of Afghanistan; I’d like to see us get out of Syria... Regardless of whether or not people agree with me on that, I’m hopeful they agree with me that we should have the debate” in Congress on a new AUMF.

A fiscal conservative, Massie serves on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.



“When I came to Congress I asked to be on a committee where I actually believe that we should spend money because I didn’t want always to be against the chairman of whatever committee I was on,” he said. “I sought out the Transportation Committee because I believe even the Tea Party believes in infrastructure spending, for instance, roads and bridges.”

Massie said he has been an advocate for infrastructure spending, but has introduced a bill to stop money from the Highway Trust Fund – which is funded by the federal tax on gasoline and diesel fuel -- from going to bicycle paths, highway roadside beautification projects, urban transit systems and other non-road uses.

“If you go back to my district and say, ‘We need to raise the fuel tax,’ they’re going to say, ‘Why are we spending the fuel tax on these things that are not really roads and bridges?’”

He said that “as a compromise,” perhaps if Congress did enact an increase in the fuels tax, all the new revenue gained from it could go exclusively to roads and bridges, with none of it going to mass transit.

His district is home to the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport near the city of Covington. The airport is the site of DHL’s North American freight hub and Amazon announced in early 2017 that it would build a \$1.5 billion distribution hub at the airport – “great news for our district,” Massie said.

He drives an electric car, a Tesla, with a license plate bearing a “Friend of Coal” emblem. Massie’s own house is “off the grid,” relying on solar power.

He sometimes drives his Tesla from his district to the nation’s capital, re-charging it along the way. “I travel the first 100 miles on solar power, then I stop in Charleston, West Virginia and charge, presumably with coal power, then when I get to Strasburg or Lexington,” in Virginia’s Shenandoah Valley, “there’s more natural gas in the mix, I assume. But the first 100 miles comes from solar power because that’s what my house is powered with.”

Massie’s mother was a nurse and his father was a beer distributor. Growing up in a town of 1,400 people -- Vanceburg, Ky. on the Ohio River -- Massie would take appliances apart and keep the pieces strewn about his room. His parents pushed him to clean up the mess. “I thought, ‘I’ll build a robot that can clean the room out of all of this junk,’” he said. “It’s kind of recursive, if you think about it.” (In computer science, a recursive procedure can repeat itself indefinitely.)

An android was beyond his abilities, but he did build a robot arm. He kept on building them in middle school and high school, entering science fairs along the way.

He was the first person from his public high school to ever go to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His high school sweetheart, Rhonda, followed him there two years later. They’re now married with four children.

As an MIT senior, Massie designed a device to allow computer users — designers, engineers, doctors or whoever — to have the physical sensation of touching virtual objects. He and Rhonda founded SensAble Technologies and operated it for a decade. Massie holds 24 technology-related patents.

When they sold the company, they bought the 1,200-acre tobacco farm where Rhonda grew up. Massie set about building them a new house, raised his family and tended 50 head of cattle. He got involved in politics by fighting agricultural zoning changes and small tax initiatives in his home county.

Massie participated in tea party events and campaigned for Rand Paul, who won a Senate seat in 2010. That year, Massie defeated a Republican incumbent to become the Lewis County judge-executive — in effect, the mayor of the county.

Rep. Geoff Davis announced in late 2011 that he would be retiring. Massie entered the race to succeed him, won a seven-way primary and then easily won both a full term and the special election to complete Davis’ term.

With re-elections in 2014 and 2016 by margins of more than 30 percentage points, Massie has a very secure seat.

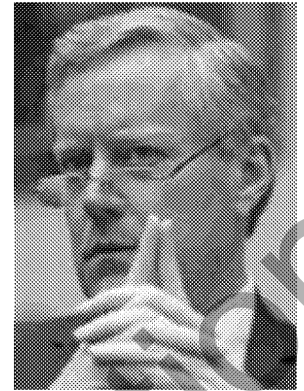
Rep. Mark Meadows (R-N.C.)

11th District, Western tip -- Great Smoky Mountains

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

Meadows took charge of the arch-conservative House Freedom Caucus in the 115th Congress, succeeding Jim Jordan of Ohio. He is a convivial and chatty former real estate broker with a strong conservative streak and a history of picking high-profile battles with party leadership.



"I'm about treating everyone with the utmost respect, regardless of ideology," he told Roll Call in late 2016 after Freedom Caucus members chose him to be their chairman. "But at the same time, I'm going to be tenacious at attacking the parts of the status quo the American people aren't satisfied with, and that's going to be just as true confronting my own party when necessary as it is the other party."

The Freedom Caucus has about 40 members, enough of a coalition to block legislation supported by Speaker Paul D. Ryan and the rest of the House Republican Conference.

Meadows led such a standoff against party leadership in early 2017 as Republicans moved to repeal the 2010 health care law. He voted to begin rolling back the legislation in January, but withheld his support of the proposed repeal bill, the American Health Care Act, which had been sweetened with an amendment to win over moderate Republicans.

Along with other Freedom Caucus members, Meadows helped prevent a vote on the repeal bill in March. "The opposition is strong," he told CQ before Ryan pulled the vote off the schedule. "They need to start over." The Freedom Caucus bore a large share of the blame for Republicans' failure to repeal the health care law, including a critical tweet sent by President Donald Trump that Republicans "must fight" caucus members in 2018 elections. "I don't know of too many people who can challenge me from the right," Meadows retorted.

Meadows and New Jersey Republican Tom MacArthur, then co-chair of the moderate Tuesday Group, drafted an amendment to the bill that drummed up more conservative support for the legislation by allowing states to apply for waivers opting out of key insurance regulations, such as setting premiums based on the health of the customer. With their amendment, the bill passed the House in May by a vote of 217-213.

Meadows had played a significant role in the health care debate before.

As a freshman in 2013, he was the lead author of a letter to party leadership requesting that any stopgap spending bill include a "defunding" of the programs established by the law. The letter was signed by 79 Republican members. Conservative support coalesced behind that idea, and when Democrats refused to go along, many federal operations shut down starting Oct. 1, 2013.

The shutdown lasted 16 days and did not achieve the goal that Meadows had sought. Eventually congressional leaders devised a deal to fund government operations for three months.

Meadows also took a leading role in the drama leading to Speaker John A. Boehner's retirement.

On July 28, 2015, he filed a motion declaring the office of speaker to be vacant, a motion that, if it had been agreed to, would have forced Boehner to relinquish his gavel.

But Meadows put the motion into a non-privileged resolution, which meant it did not have to be immediately voted on. With the lingering threat of such a sanction, though, along with the discontent among the most conservative Republicans, Boehner announced in late September that he would retire.

Joining almost all his Republican colleagues, Meadows voted on Oct. 29, 2015, for Ryan to succeed Boehner.

Meadows said in 2015 that the battles with Boehner over spending and committee assignments were "really more about trying to have a conversation about making this place work, where everybody's voice matters, where it's not a punitive culture."

In June 2015, after Meadows voted against the rule setting up the debate on the fast-track Trade Promotion Authority bill, Oversight and Government Reform Chairman Jason Chaffetz of Utah took away his gavel as chairman of the Government Operations Subcommittee.

A few days later, Chaffetz reversed that decision, explaining that he'd spoken with Meadows several times after his removal and "we both better understand each other."

Like other Freedom Caucus members, Meadows voted against the trade bill when the House finally passed it on a 218-208 vote.

He also serves on the Transportation and Infrastructure and Foreign Affairs committees. Outside of his committees, Meadows has looked at the U.S. tax code and land development, issues he's intimate with from professional experience. He voted for the Republican tax bill (PL 115-97) in December 2017.

He has proposed a "business approach to conservation" by allowing landowners to sell or transfer the tax deductions they get for conservation easement donations - thereby allowing landowners with smaller tax burdens to still benefit from an easement.

Before arriving in Washington in 2013, Meadows was a real estate developer in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Prior to his House service, he was active as a fundraiser and party official. "It was something that we got involved with in North Carolina mainly because it was so easy to get involved," he said.

Meadows answered the call for a precinct meeting and was the only person who showed up: "When you are the only one, you become the chairman of the precinct." He eventually served a stint as the chairman of the Macon County Republican Party.

Meadows was born in France, where his father was stationed with the Army and his mother was working as a nurse. The family settled in Tampa, Fla. Meadows told the Smoky Mountain News that he was a "fat nerd" in his early years, although he worked hard to lose weight in high school - and he caught the attention of his future wife. They completed their college studies at the University of South Florida.

The couple visited western North Carolina on their honeymoon, and they were so taken with the region that they eventually bought a lot and built a second home there. They moved there in the mid-1980s. Trying to figure out what the town of Highlands needed, they opened a small sandwich shop. Meadows said he went into the business blind, but after some initial bumps it became a success. He later sold the shop to get into real estate.

A new congressional district map for 2012 opened the door to a possible House career. Democratic Rep. Heath Shuler, a leader of the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition, decided to retire at the end of the 112th Congress (2011-12) - Republicans controlled redistricting in the state, and the redrawn 11th District was going to be a very difficult hold for Democrats.

Meadows prevailed in an eight-person primary, then easily won a runoff. In the general election, he defeated Shuler's former chief of staff, Hayden Rogers, by almost 15 points.

In 2014, Meadows won a second term with 63 percent of the vote, and in 2016 he won a third term with 64 percent. It is difficult to imagine a Democrat defeating him.

Rep. Carol Miller (R-W.Va.)

3rd District, South -- Huntington, Beckley

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

Miller brings a commitment to a pro-Trump agenda in a state that remains firmly in the president's camp. A state representative before her election to Congress, She replaces two-term Republican Evan Jenkins, who failed to secure the GOP nomination for Senate. Her victory continues the GOP's winning streak in West Virginia's 3rd District, dating to Jenkins' 2014 defeat of longtime Democratic Rep. Nick J. Rahall II.



Miller backs the president's plan for a border wall, and his opposition to free trade deals and gun control. She's played up the culture war over immigration. One of her campaign ads backed a proposal to make English the national language.

But in Congress she will focus primarily on issues that have confounded her state's policymakers, primarily how to combat the state's opioid crisis and secure more jobs.

Miller views the opioid crisis as a problem for both national and local authorities. "People who are drug addicted have a hole in their soul and there's got to be multiple different ways to handle it because all people are different," she said in an interview with WCHS, an ABC affiliate in Charleston, W. Va.

She wants the federal government to provide resources.

"We need the money from the federal government with matches that will help us have more beds for more treatment because it's the recovery portion that I think is so vital with these poor, drug-addicted people that may have started out just by having surgery and become addicted."

Miller will also look to curb regulation to improve the economy, arguing that they hurt businesses by deterring them from creating jobs. She's also supported the state's coal industry, which is still a big employer in her district.

Miller is a second generation member of the House. Her father, Samuel L. Devine was a lawyer and represented Ohio's 12th district from 1959 to 1981.

"I was the third daughter of a U.S. congressman," Miller said in an interview with the Herald-Dispatch of Huntington, W. Va. "From the time I was eight years old, I'd learned how to speak with people and listen to them. Particularly, I think the listening is the most important part because you provide services for people when you're a public servant, and I'm glad when I can help people with their problems."

She first joined the West Virginia House in 2006 and rose to majority whip. At home, she's a bison farmer, a point she alluded to in a campaign ad that said her goal in Congress was to "cut the bull out of politics." Her husband owns an auto dealership based in Huntington with locations throughout the state.

Miller took up the issue of children and substance abuse in the West Virginia House's Women's Caucus and eventually joined the West Virginia Juvenile Justice Task Force to work on the issue. She focused on an initiative called "Justice Reinvestment," a strategy to prioritize rehabilitation over penalization to reduce recidivism for people struggling with addiction.

She also served on the board of Lily's Place, a medical center that provides care to infants born with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome, which occurs when newborns are exposed to addictive substances during their mother's

pregnancy. The center attracted national attention when First Lady Melania Trump visited in 2017, and the center's executive director took part in a White House video commending the Trump administration's efforts to address the opioid crisis.

She was the first candidate to get financial backing and assistance from Winning for Women, a group focused on supporting GOP candidates in congressional races. Susan B. Anthony's List, which supports anti-abortion candidates, also endorsed Miller.

Not for Public Distribution

Rep. Ralph Norman (R-S.C.)

5th District, North central -- Rock Hill

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

A former state legislator and businessman, Norman has cemented his image as a reliable small-government Republican during his abbreviated first term in the House.

He won his seat in a June 2017 special election, replacing Mick Mulvaney, who became the director of both the Office of Management and Budget and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau in the Trump administration. It was 11 years after Norman's first unsuccessful bid for the same seat in 2006.

A developer of hotels, shopping centers and retail stores, Norman appropriately joined the Small Business Committee, as well as the Science, Space and Technology Committee.

The first bill he introduced would require federal regulations to be based on "the best available science" and explained in a summary, in layman's terms, of the government's findings when the regulation is announced. It's a companion bill to Oklahoma Republican James Lankford's measure in the Senate.

Much of Norman's legislation would cut federal programs and spending. He offered an amendment to repeal the Affordable Care Act, which did not go to the floor for a vote, to a bill passed by the House in November 2017 repealing another piece of the 2010 health care law, a board to find savings in Medicare.

Another amendment Norman authored, proposed on a September 2017 omnibus spending bill, would have cut the EPA's budget by \$1.9 billion.

"I would really like to start tackling Washington's spending problems now before my 16th grandchild comes in December," Norman said on the floor during debate, calling the EPA's spending "overreach and wasteful."

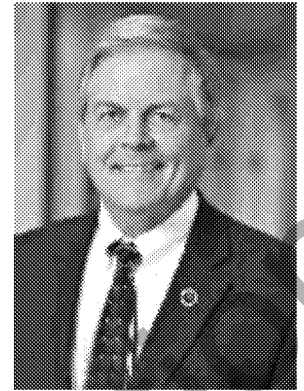
When budget negotiations ground to a halt in January 2018, Norman introduced a bill to pay the salaries of active-duty military personnel and those in reserves doing "inactive-duty training" during the federal government shutdown.

He fought for months against tariffs on washing machines and solar panels, finally implemented by President Donald Trump in January 2018. Both are significant industries in South Carolina -- Norman's district includes a Samsung washing machine plant. He signed letters with other members of Congress to the Trump Administration opposing the tariffs and testified before the interagency Trade Policy Staff Committee and the International Trade Commission.

"Blocking imports is serious business and should be done only in the rarest of circumstances, and only for the soundest of reasons," Norman told the Trade Policy Committee in January 2018 about the proposal for washing machine tariffs. "The circumstances surrounding this petition are neither rare nor extraordinary, and the reasons it offers for blocking imports are not sound."

Norman supports term limits, arguing they "would cut the influence of special interest lobbyists and encourage a true citizen-legislature."

He favors a four-term limit for House members and two- or three-term limit for senators. "And then get them out and let them live under some of the laws they make," he said.



He introduced a bill with California Democrat Ro Khanna to end certain benefits for former members of Congress, including health care benefits and open access to the Capitol. "Lifetime access to this exclusive circle keeps them in that circle, and distances former members from the experiences of everyday Americans," Norman said in a statement.

He favors making changes in Social Security, arguing on his campaign website that "to sustain its long-term viability we must have the political courage to raise the retirement age by 2 months and lower benefits for the top 10% of earners."

Asked to assess the early months of Trump's presidency, Norman said, "I give him an A-plus, mainly because he set the agenda for conservative values. What he did with [Supreme Court nominee] Neil Gorsuch - in my mind he set the gold standard."

Norman also praised "the fact for every new regulation that comes on, he cuts two." He added that Trump is "a business guy and that's who we need in Washington."

At first Norman wasn't a Trump supporter in the battle for the 2016 Republican presidential nomination. He initially backed Gov. Scott Walker of Wisconsin because of his fight against public-sector labor unions in his state. When Walker left the race, Norman supported former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush.

As for Trump, "Being an outsider, with no political experience, no endorsements, the media [against him] -- I just didn't think he could win," he said.

Norman spent eight years in the South Carolina House of Representatives. Probably his best-known vote came in 2013 when he was one of only two members to vote against South Carolina borrowing \$120 million to provide incentives to Boeing so the company would expand its facility in North Charleston.

He said he wasn't necessarily opposed to the concept of providing incentives to Boeing to locate manufacturing in his state. But, "I was against keeping it hidden" and was in favor of "knowing where the money went. I was for the sunlight to explain to the public where did the money go."

The year Norman made his first House bid, 2006, was a very bad one for Republican candidates across the nation. Norman was seeking to unseat Democrat John M. Spratt, Jr. "You parade as being a conservative, but you go to Washington and vote with the liberals," Norman told Spratt during a 2006 debate. "It's an extremist party represented by Nancy Pelosi."

Spratt beat Norman by nearly 14 percentage points in 2006, but he would ultimately be defeated four years later by Mulvaney.

Norman's road to victory was not an easy one. He first had to elbow his way through a Republican primary crowd of six other candidates. He finished first in the primary but Tommy Pope, the speaker pro tempore of the South Carolina House, trailed him by only 135 votes and the two men advanced to a runoff.

Norman won the runoff by a mere 221 votes out of a total vote of 35,425. His victory over Democrat Archie Parnell, a former Goldman Sachs executive and tax lawyer, was also close. Norman took 51 percent of the vote.

Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-D.C.)

At Large, District of Columbia -- At Large

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

Norton is an advocate for myriad causes in Congress. Sometimes described as "the Warrior on the Hill," she is a consistent sponsor of legislation and powerful orator for the institution of D.C. autonomy and increased D.C. voting rights. But she also garners respect from all quarters as an effective promoter of the capital's economy.



Since her first term in Congress in 1991, her rhetoric on the city's political status has been borrowed from the Revolutionary era - she has been a key figure in reviving the "no taxation without representation" slogan. She describes as "self-evident" the city's rights to a voting representative and a local government free from congressional interference. The purpose of home rule, granted in 1973, was "to restore, not to create, rights," she has said. Her efforts for D.C. statehood appear to be gaining more traction, with a record 138 co-sponsors on her March 2017 bill on the issue.

Her conviction recalls the civil rights era. Norton is a third-generation Washingtonian. Her mother taught elementary school, and her lawyer father worked on housing issues for the city government; they were Roosevelt Democrats. Norton attended the segregated and prestigious Dunbar High School, within view of the Capitol -- it was a de facto magnet school for blacks hoping to attend college. She was there on May 17, 1954, when the Supreme Court handed down its desegregation decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

A strong education was essential "to get around the segregation, to get around the strictures in the District," she said. At the famously liberal Antioch College in Ohio, she became involved in protests through the NAACP, and she continued her activism while studying law at Yale.

Living in New York, Norton worked as an assistant legal director for the American Civil Liberties Union and later chaired the New York City Commission on Human Rights from 1970 to 1977. That led to her appointment during the Jimmy Carter administration as the first woman to chair the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. She is still energetic at 80 - Norton often race-walks around the city.

Norton's first bill in 1991, often reintroduced since, was to admit D.C. to the union as a state. "What we're trying to do is build up the momentum so we have overwhelming Democratic support, as we do now, so that by the time we get to where statehood is particularly ripe we will be ready," she says.

She has also pursued a slew of proposals to protect or expand local autonomy and representation. In 2007 and 2009 she almost secured voting representation in the House, but those efforts collapsed over Democrat-opposed amendments to nullify the city's gun control laws.

She sits on the Oversight and Government Reform Committee, which oversees D.C. Norton regularly resists congressional efforts to overturn district laws. She says she has succeeded by finding allies who represent states with laws on the same divisive issues, such as marijuana and assisted suicide.

Although she fights to become a full-voting House member, Norton says that her current status has not hindered her work. "A member of Congress better not consider that the vote is the key to her goals," she says. "Her goals depend upon how she strategizes, how she negotiates, what kind of relationships she builds with people on both sides."

Her record on economic development seems to support that claim. Washington's high-cost housing drives many taxpayers into Virginia and Maryland, and Norton won 1997 enactment (and continual renewal) of a \$5,000 tax credit for homebuyers in the District. Similarly, some people leave the city to take advantage of in-state tuition rates for state college systems. In 1999, she secured annual grants of up to \$10,000 for D.C. students to go to any state-supported institution in the country.

And then there's property development. Norton worked her way onto the Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings and Emergency Management -- she says it "may be the best decision I have ever made in the Congress." She chaired the panel from 2007 through 2010. Among other things, it decides on leases and construction projects in the federal city. Norton steered the new headquarters of the Department of Homeland Security to the city's economically stagnant Ward 8, where it is under construction. She also has helped free up federal land along the Anacostia River for economic development by the private sector.

However, she gave up the top Democratic spot on that subcommittee in July 2013 to become the ranking member of the Highways and Transit Subcommittee. That move put Norton into the mix as lawmakers started work on another reauthorization of surface transportation programs, which she helped author and pass in 2015.

As a member of the transit panel, Norton has endorsed former Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood's proposal to shrink the 16-person Metro system board to a temporary reform board of five people representing D.C., Maryland, Virginia and the federal government. She called for the current board members to resign in August 2017 to implement LaHood's proposal before lawmakers begin weighing a 2018 renewal of the annual \$150 million appropriated to the Metro system.

Norton takes on some senatorial duties as the only D.C. delegate, such as recommending D.C. district judges. Former Presidents Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama had consulted with Norton before nominating D.C. judges, a normal courtesy between president and senators of all parties. Norton's "greatest disappointment" with President Donald Trump is that he has nominated judges without her input. She says on other affairs, like the president's budget proposals, D.C. has fared well with Trump. "We're flying under the radar," Norton says.

She looks beyond the District, usually with a liberal gaze, on a number of issues. She has constantly pushed for an expansion of pre-kindergarten programs offered by school districts, and she has suggested using grants as incentives for such expansion. Doing so would maximize the use of existing educational infrastructure and lower child-raising costs, she says.

With a nod to her EEOC days, she often introduces a measure to "prohibit discrimination in the payment of wages on account of sex, race, or national origin." In 2011, she made headlines by walking out of an Oversight hearing when Republicans refused to accept a Georgetown University Law Center student as a witness on contraception in health care plans provided by religion-affiliated institutions. (Georgetown is a Jesuit school.)

Norton herself was teaching law at Georgetown in 1990 when Democratic Del. Walter E. Fauntroy stepped down to run for mayor. (She retired from her professorship in 2017). She won in 1990 with almost 62 percent of the vote, and she has never won less than 83 percent since.

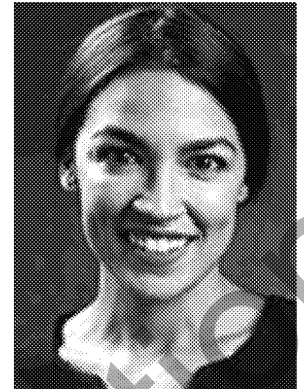
Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.)

14th District, Northwest Queens and East Bronx

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

Ocasio-Cortez's blowout win over House Democratic Caucus Chairman Joseph Crowley in June, in the 14th District primary, let the world know that many progressive voters were looking for a new brand of leadership in 2018.



Ocasio-Cortez fit the bill: young, 28 on primary day, a self-described “democratic socialist” who called for guaranteed health care and jobs for all, and anti-Trump to the core.

Ocasio-Cortez hit all the hot buttons that Democratic leaders in Washington feared would turn off independent voters, but which motivated liberal ones. She called for President Trump's impeachment, abolishment of the Homeland Security Department's Immigration and Customs Enforcement division, which enforces immigration laws in the interior of the country, and she declined to say whether she'd back California's Nancy Pelosi to lead the party in 2019.

“You know, I think it is like that red herring, where the more time we spend debating any one individual person or figure is less time that we spend talking about Medicare-for-all, tuition-free public college and a great new deal,” she told CNN.

For Democrats on the left, Ocasio-Cortez represented a new generation of leadership that would fight Republicans' aggressive, partisan tactics with its own, and would not compromise liberal goals.

In addition to Medicare and jobs for all and free college, Ocasio-Cortez promised paid family and sick leave, housing for all, an end to the war on drugs and for-profit prisons, protection for the so-called Dreamers and a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants in the country, funding for infrastructure and an overhaul of campaign finance laws aimed at excising corporate money.

She beat Crowley by 15 percentage points, tantamount to election in the overwhelmingly Democratic district. She defeated Republican Anthony Pappas, a professor of economics and finance at St. John's University, a Catholic college in Queens, in the general.

Ocasio-Cortez was born in the Parkchester section of the Bronx. Her Puerto Rico-born mother worked as a house cleaner and bus driver. Her father, Bronx-born and of Puerto Rican descent, was an architect. When Ocasio-Cortez was five, the family moved to the Westchester suburbs. Her father died of lung cancer in 2008.

Ocasio-Cortez thrived in high school and attended Boston University where she studied economics and international relations. During school, she interned for Democratic Sen. Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts and worked on immigration issues.

After graduation in 2011, she waitressed at New York City restaurants to support her family. That experience, she said, gave her insight into the challenges many working-class Americans face.

Ocasio-Cortez also started a children's book publishing company called Book Avenue Press that published work depicting the Bronx, New York City's poorest borough, in a positive light. She also taught summer courses in community leadership to high school students for the National Hispanic Institute.

During the 2016 presidential campaign, she worked as an organizer for Vermont independent Sen. Bernie Sanders.

Motivated by the experience, she joined other Sanders alums in launching bids for office. Few took her seriously. The New York Times didn't cover the campaign at all until it noted, in an editorial on the eve of the primary, that Crowley had skipped two scheduled debates with Ocasio-Cortez and was, in the paper's view, disrespecting the voters.

Crowley, the head of the Queens Democratic Party, was a fixture in New York politics and was seen, in Washington, as a possible replacement for Pelosi, were she to step down as party leader. The district includes parts of Queens and the Bronx.

But Crowley was also, in some obvious ways, out of sync with his district: an older, white politician representing a majority-minority population with a fired-up youth movement.

Ocasio-Cortez played it up. Her campaign highlighted her family's working-class background and roots in Puerto Rico. She also relied heavily on grass-roots techniques, calling thousands of people, knocking on doors and appealing to young voters by engaging with them on Facebook and Twitter.

"Our campaign was focused on just a laser-focused message of economic, social, and racial dignity for working-class Americans," she said on MSNBC's "Morning Joe."

Del. Stacey Plaskett (D-V.I.)

At Large, Virgin Islands -- At Large

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

A seasoned Washington veteran whose parents grew up in the U.S. Virgin Islands before moving to New York in the 1950s, Plaskett says she intends to use her time in the House to spur economic growth and mitigate poverty back home, an admittedly difficult feat for a non-voting delegate.



Now in her second term, Plaskett says she learned how to be an effective member despite the limitations: "Learning how to gain the one virtue that I lack tremendously which is patience. That legislation is not easy and legislation takes time."

When House Democratic leaders created a new caucus leadership position for someone who has served five terms or less, she ran against Michigan's Debbie Dingell and California's Tony Cardenas, and though the race went three rounds, she lost to Cardenas.

Plaskett's top legislative focus will be enhancing economic development opportunities in the Virgin Islands, especially after two major hurricanes, Irma and Maria swept through in September 2017.

When Congress debated a \$15.4 billion emergency appropriations bill to help victims of Hurricane Harvey in Texas, Plaskett reminded her colleagues not to forget the U.S. territories in the Caribbean who were about to get hit by Irma. With its three main Virgin Islands substantially damaged, she will likely be asking for additional aid to help her constituents. The first appropriations bill was just "an initial supplement and I think there's consensus across the board that additional funding is going to be needed for all of these areas....everyone recognizes also that for the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, recovery is much slower."

She says one of her biggest accomplishments was getting language into the House-passed fiscal 2018 defense authorization bill that would provide personnel stationed in the U.S. Virgin Islands with the same basic housing allowance as those in the 50 states and the District of Columbia, rather than the cost reimbursement for overseas housing.

Before taking office, Plaskett's law practice included work on public-private partnerships and tax incentives for the Virgin Islands Economic Development Authority. She said she is trying to work with committee leaders and their staffs to incorporate language in key economic packages to extend programmatic and financial support to the territories.

"So often what happens is that people will write language and they'll say 'for the states,' " she said. "They just forget to add 'and territories.' Or they use formulas that really don't work in the Virgin Islands."

In addition to economic development, Plaskett is pushing legislation that would allow the territory to award grants to public four-year colleges and universities in any state as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico or Guam to cover the difference between the in-state and out-of-state tuition and fees. She also sponsored legislation that would create a special visa waiver to allow people from the eastern Caribbean to come into the territories on an expedited fashion since they are outside of the customs zone. "It would allow full paying people in the eastern Caribbean to use our hospitals rather than going to London or going to other places for medical services."

She considers herself both a moderate and maverick. "I think Caribbean people are by nature squarely democratically conservative people. I don't think you would consider us California liberals....I think that I am not the mold of what one expects from someone from the territory....I don't expect to come to Washington and expect

things to be given to me. I expect to be someone who makes myself known so we're not forgotten...it is important to exert leadership."

Plaskett sits on the Agriculture Committee, which is important because of the islands' rural assistance and support needs, and she also landed a seat on the Oversight and Government Reform Committee..

She wants to get onto the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee because of her background in public finance. "I think that's the area [concerning] public-private partnerships that T and I will be moving towards." She also noted the importance of ports to her constituents. "Just getting things over to the islands, it doesn't take a truck...it has to be shipped out....getting food to our local supermarkets is not the same as Wawa and the Piggly Wiggly."

Plaskett drew national attention when during a floor speech in March 2015 she compared the plight of residents in the U.S. territories with the Civil Rights struggles of the 1960s.

Plaskett said the inability to vote has a direct correlation to poverty in the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Guam and Northern Mariana Islands, which struggle with high costs of energy and food as well as high unemployment.

"We have contributed much and we deserve better," Plaskett said on the floor. "Not tying citizenship and the right to vote to the sovereign soil on which an individual is born controverts the most basic English and thus American law."

When Plaskett's parents moved to New York, it was a time when the territories faced a job shortage. Her father was a police officer and her mother a court clerk in New York, making her home a secure first stop for friends and relatives coming from the islands for work or school.

Though she was raised in Brooklyn, Plaskett made frequent visits home until she moved to the islands in the mid-2000s.

"New York was where my parents lived, but the Virgin Islands was home," she said.

Between college and law school, Plaskett worked for Democrat Ron de Lugo, the Virgin Islands' first delegate, as a congressional aide. After law school, Plaskett was an acting deputy assistant district attorney and then a corporate attorney in New York. She later came back to Washington, D.C., to be a counsel on the House Ethics Committee.

Plaskett moved back to the Virgin Islands to write a still-unfinished book and get involved in community activities. Her husband was a member of the islands' legislature and the family would help on state-level campaigns.

But in 2012, the island's largest private sector employer - the Hovensa oil refinery - shut down, and the unemployment rate jumped from 9 percent to 12 percent.

"I just became very frustrated with what I saw going on with the people who were making the decisions," she said, "and decided to throw my name out there for a position that I thought I could do well." In the 2012 primary, Plaskett ran and lost to 16-year incumbent Democratic Del. Donna M.C. Christensen.

In 2014, when Christensen decided to run for governor, Plaskett tried again. Her former boss, de Lugo, and much of the island's party establishment endorsed her primary opponent Shawn-Michael Malone, a member of the territorial legislature, but Plaskett prevailed in a close race. Amid the islands' recent economic troubles, voters seemed to like her stance to shake things up. She won overwhelmingly in the general election and had little trouble in 2016.

Rep. Ayanna S. Pressley (D-Mass.)

7th District, Part of Boston and inner suburbs

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

In taking over the deep-blue Boston congressional seat once held by John F. Kennedy, Pressley represents one of the nation's most liberal districts, and she plans to use that perch to pursue an unapologetically progressive policy agenda on Capitol Hill.



“This is a seat that will never be represented by a Republican,” said Pressley, the first ever African-American woman elected to the state's congressional delegation. “That means we can be bold and visionary and innovative.”

Her policy priorities in Congress include a criminal justice overhaul, legislation to prevent gun violence and measures to expand health care access and to protect abortion rights. The debate over gun control helped motivate her unexpected, and successful, primary challenge to 20-year incumbent Michael E. Capuano. The Congressional Black Caucus had endorsed Capuano.

“One of the main reasons I ran for Congress was I want to fight for this to be addressed as a public health issue,” she said of gun policy.

Pressley, who spent nearly a decade on the Boston City Council and before that was a long-time aide to then-Sen. John Kerry of Massachusetts, will seek a spot on the Judiciary Committee, not only because the panel has jurisdiction over federal sentencing and criminal justice overhauls — but also because it would serve as the main committee to pursue impeachment of the president.

Though most in Democratic leadership have avoided calling for President Trump's impeachment, Pressley has no qualms about invoking the “I” word: “I do plan to actively campaign for impeachment,” she said. Her predecessor Capuano voted in December 2017 to begin debate on impeachment, but the measure failed in the GOP-controlled chamber.

She also has an interest in the Education and the Workforce Committee. She said that as a freshman she expects to have little sway in her committee assignments, but plans to work on her priority matters no matter which panels she gets.

Pressley is unlikely to out-liberal Capuano by much. In the 115th Congress (2017-18), Capuano voted with his party more than 99 percent of the time, when a vote split a majority of Republicans from a majority of Democrats, and he voted against Trump's preferred outcome on legislation about 85 percent of the time, according to a CQ analysis.

But Pressley offers the district's liberals an insurgent, emboldened by the liberal resistance movement that women, especially women of color, have fueled during the Trump presidency. Expect her to be a reliable vote on progressive matters, but not necessarily one who will toe the leadership's line.

Without getting into specifics, Pressley said her party “is going to have to dig deep and have a conversation” about its future.

One difference between Pressley and Capuano is her refusal to take campaign donations from the political action committees of corporations. She says that in Congress, she will continue to reject such money and will support campaign finance, ethics and lobbying overhaul legislation.

On criminal justice matters, Pressley, whose single mother raised her in Chicago while her father was in and out of prison, said she wants incarcerated people counted at their home addresses, not their prisons.

She also plans to focus on the inequities in health care and education and other areas in the poor parts of her minority-majority district.

Though her district is home to some of the Bay State's toniest neighborhoods, including Beacon Hill and the South End, as well as the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology, it also includes low-income areas such as Roxbury and Mattapan. Women of color in the district have higher rates of maternal mortality than the city's white residents, Pressley said.

She also intends to be a vocal voice in the me-too movement. Pressley identifies herself as a survivor of sexual assault. Though she has not disclosed details, she says she survived years of childhood sexual trauma and a rape while a college student at Boston University.

She will work "to ensure that survivors can get the healing and the justice that they deserve," she said. "Wherever I need to be raising my voice. . . to challenge rape culture, I will."

Growing up in Chicago, Pressley's mother served as an advocate and a role model, getting her daughter into the private, elite Francis W. Parker School, on partial scholarship; the school's tuition rates are currently \$36,000 for high schoolers.

Pressley, despite being elected to campus leadership positions, dropped out of college, never earning a degree, to help her mother pay her bills after her mother lost her job. Her mother, a regular presence around the Boston City Hall when her daughter served on the council, even though she lived in New York, died of leukemia in 2011.

On the city council, Pressley successfully worked toward a recent overhaul of Boston's liquor license system, allowing for more licenses as a way to spur commerce in some of the city's less-affluent quarters.

She lives in Dorchester with her husband, Conan Harris, who is the deputy director for Boston Mayor Marty Walsh's office of public safety, and her step-daughter, Cora.

Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-Md.)

8th District, Part of Montgomery County; Westminster

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

Raskin has taught constitutional law, election law and criminal law and procedure at American University law school in Washington since 1990, has been in the Maryland Senate since 2007, and has been a writer for left-leaning magazines such as The Nation.

Raskin has served in a state legislative body where 70 percent of members are Democrats. Asked how he'd adapt to a chamber where Republicans are the majority party, Raskin said he'd spent his career defying predictions by people who told him he could not achieve his legislative goals.

When he first ran for the Maryland Senate, he did so against a 32-year incumbent Democrat.

"I was told it was fool's errand. Everybody told me 'it's impossible, you can't win' and 'even if by some miracle you were to win, you will never be able to get done any of the crazy stuff you're talking about,'" he said. That included abolishing the death penalty, legalizing marriage between same-sex couples and restoring voting rights to ex-felons.

As the number of progressive Democrats increased in the state Senate, Raskin saw some of his goals accomplished.

So he enters the House an optimist.

"I don't know exactly how we will get to move the needle on gun safety or on climate change or on economic inequality," he says, "but I know we're not going to be able to do if we don't go and try."

He serves on the Judiciary Committee as well as on the Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

He said one first-term priority is to pass legislation to prohibit certain types of firearms he described as "military-style assault weapons," as a Democratic-controlled Congress did in 1994.

In 2013 Maryland passed one of the most stringent gun safety laws in the nation.

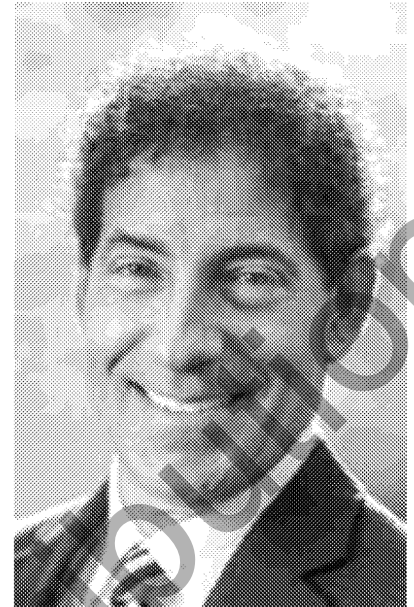
"I would like us to take the Maryland gun safety approach national," Raskin said. He wants universal background checks for gun purchasers and tighter inspection of firearms dealers by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

On another subject close to home, Raskin said he has a personal stake in the safety of the Washington-area's beleaguered Metro transit system, which many of his constituents ride to work.

The National Transportation Safety Board issued a damning report in May 2016 on neglected maintenance and poor operational decisions that led to the 2015 L'Enfant Plaza fire and smoke incident in which one passenger was killed.

"I live three blocks away from the Metro and would hope to take the Metro to work whenever I can," he said. "I will be deeply personally invested, as well as professionally invested, in the improvement of Metro's safety record."

As a young man, Raskin lived in the Adams-Morgan neighborhood of Washington D.C.



“When I was a kid and Metro was built here, it was the jewel of the transportation system nationally,” he said. “There’s been generally a disinvestment in public things, in infrastructure. I think Metro is a pretty good indicator of how much we have disinvested from public things.”

Raskin said Congress should consider spending money to support Metro’s operating costs because many federal employees ride the Metro.

“We need a New Deal-sized investment in American infrastructure, but it has to be suffused with environmental values. The next Industrial Revolution will be a green Industrial Revolution and we cannot start it a moment too soon. Otherwise we’re going to be pitted into a zero-sum game dynamic between environmentalists and labor.”

In the Democratic primary, Raskin finished first with 34 percent of the vote in a nine-person field. Wine merchant David Trone, spent more than \$13 million of his own money and finished second, about 8,000 votes behind Raskin.

“We won based on a very aggressive grass-roots mobilization and door-to-door campaign, and we had 169 events in people’s living rooms and back yards,” Raskin said. “We proved that progressive grass-roots politics can beat big money.”

Raskin said he abhorred the Supreme Court’s 2010 Citizens United decision and testified against it before the Senate Judiciary Committee in 2014, when Democrats were in the majority.

He wants to eliminate large contributions in elections by matching small donors’ contributions to candidates with taxpayer money up to a specific limit “and then have people stop fundraising.”

Raskin called for a trade policy that would “address the real pain of people who have been injured by economic dislocation.”

Some of that dislocation has been spurred by trade agreements, some by technological change. “Donald Trump has obviously seized upon this issue in order to drive a wedge in the Democratic coalition,” he said during the 2016 campaign.

“As Democrats, we have to learn from the Trump phenomenon that we cannot triangulate away our own base,” he said. “We can never abandon union workers, we cannot abandon the working middle class, and we cannot forsake the vast majority of the American public which works for a living and which has been deeply unsettled by the economic trends of our time.”

Rep. Harley Rouda (D-Calif.)

48th District, Coastal Orange County -- Huntington Beach, Costa Mesa

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

In defeating 15-term incumbent Republican Dana Rohrabacher, Rouda's win marks a new era in southern California politics, where once-safe GOP districts are shifting left under President Donald Trump. Orange County, once synonymous with conservative Republicanism, is no longer.

The district, affluent and increasingly diverse, reflects California's larger shift but also the wariness of many business-minded conservatives about the president.

Trump narrowly lost the district in the 2016 presidential election to Democrat Hillary Clinton and Rouda was able to ride a wave of Democratic enthusiasm, and opposition to Trump.

Rohrabacher, meanwhile, ran as a Trump supporter. With the president's support for Russian President Vladimir Putin under scrutiny, Rohrabacher was also hurt by his reputation as one of Russia's strongest allies in Congress.

Rouda ran as a progressive, but his record as a political donor would indicate he's no liberal. A former Republican, he has given money to GOP candidates, including most recently to the 2016 presidential campaign of the Republican governor of Ohio, John Kasich, a personal friend.

He promised to work with both Democrats and Republicans in Congress.

He plans to focus on education, gun violence prevention, environmental protection and healthcare and hopes to land seats on the House Intelligence and Judiciary committees.

On education, he's focused on pre-school access – he wants it expanded – and college affordability. He also believes the United States must increase educational opportunities in technical trades needed in a modern workforce.

Rouda says he supports the right to own a gun, but wants to apply more restrictions. "The right to bear arms does not mean you can carry any gun, anytime, anywhere you want," he said.

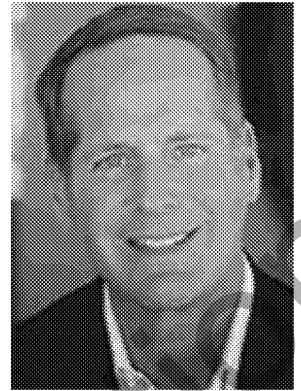
Among other ideas, Rouda wants mandatory background checks for all gun buyers. Under current rules, gun shops must conduct checks, but not sellers at gun shows or private sellers.

He would ban 3-D printing of guns, assault rifles and high capacity magazines, and he opposes the National Rifle Association in its push for federal reciprocity legislation that would force states to honor concealed carry permits issued by other states.

Rouda says Orange County can become a hub of clean energy technology as a way to protect the environment and bring in new businesses. He notes that the district already boasts an economy built on innovation, technology, universities and forward-thinking municipalities.

"Clean tech and clean energy are going to be robust industries," he said.

Health care is also important to Rouda. He says that the Affordable Care Act was right to require that insurance companies offer policies to those with pre-existing conditions at the same prices they charge others.



But he has also embraced the more far-reaching proposal of many liberal Democrats to allow every American to buy into the Medicare program, which currently provides government health insurance to seniors.

He envisions a marketplace with private insurance options, but with more competition and lower drug prices. He would allow Medicare to negotiate prices with the pharmaceutical companies.

The son of Harley Rouda Sr. — an Ohio real estate tycoon and former president of the National Association of Realtors — the younger Rouda went to college at the University of Kentucky but returned to Ohio for business and law school. He now lives in Laguna Beach, Calif.

Rouda worked as a corporate lawyer at an Ohio firm before following his father into the family business. He left the real estate industry in 2012 after Berkshire Hathaway bought his firm, Real Living Real Estate. Since then, Rouda has worked as an adviser and investor in technology start-ups.

He won a close June 2018 primary over Hans Keirstead, a stem cell researcher who'd won the state Democratic Party's endorsement. The campaign was nasty, with Rouda running ads accusing Keirstead of misleading voters about his own credentials and about the committee posts Democratic leaders had offered him should he be elected.

Rouda's wife, Kaira, is an author of romance novels.

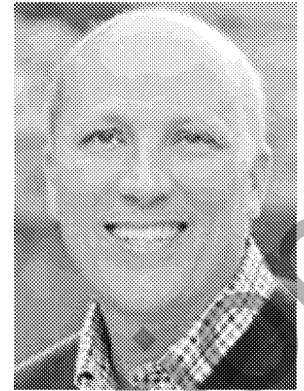
Rep. Chip Roy (R-Texas)

21st District, Central -- northern San Antonio and suburbs, part of Austin and suburbs

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

Roy has worked on Capitol Hill as a staffer for the Senate Judiciary Committee and as chief of staff for a fellow Texan, Republican Sen. Ted Cruz.



Now he's returning to represent Texas' 21st District and has vowed a conservative approach like that of his former boss.

"They don't have to wonder if I'll stand up to the powers that be, to the swamp if you want to use the president's vernacular," Roy said in a May 2018 interview with KXAN, an Austin-based NBC news station.

Backed by conservative groups like the Club for Growth and the House Freedom Fund, Roy says he'll prioritize a balanced budget, lower federal spending, deregulation of health care to help lower costs and further simplification of the tax code.

Roy is replacing a fellow Republican, Lamar Smith, who is retiring after 16 terms. The district stretches from San Antonio to Austin and is safe Republican territory.

Winning the GOP primary was tantamount to election, so it drew a crowd. Roy led a field of 18 in the March vote, then edged businessman Matt McCall in a May runoff with 53 percent of the vote.

Roy has said he'd be interested in serving on the Judiciary Committee, citing his experience as a staffer for the panel's Senate counterpart.

He supports building a wall along the southern border, telling KXAN that the country should start building physical barriers and then deal with related challenges, such as how to wall off Big Bend National Park, which sits on the Texas-Mexico border, as they arise.

During the April debate, Roy argued that people who were in the country illegally increased costs for Texans, citing different studies that found more than \$130 billion in extra expenses.

"That's a problem. That is a massive amount of cost on the backs of Texans," Roy said. "We can get reimbursements from the feds, but that's not the problem. The federal government is \$21 trillion in debt."

A cancer survivor, Roy says his own medical history shapes his views on health care and that his battle with cancer reinforced his opposition to abortion. He opposes federal funding for Planned Parenthood.

Roy said he supports allowing states to manage their Medicaid funding, an idea Republicans in Congress proposed in trying to repeal and replace the 2010 health care law in 2017.

"I believe we should basically live our lives allowing California to be California and let Texas be Texas," he said on KXAN. "Let us manage our lives closer to home where we can take care of people in our communities."

Block granting Medicaid would save the federal government money, Roy said, another issue he frequently raises. He would prioritize funding for the military and veterans, as well as aid to Israel, Roy told KXAN.

He says the GOP tax overhaul, enacted in 2017, is a first step, and that he would support a few different paths forward to expand on the law, such as a national sales tax or a flat tax. On his campaign web site, he also floats "a truly federalist approach" of allowing states to collect taxes and remit them to the Treasury.

In his campaign, Roy gathered support from conservative firebrands, including Cruz, who campaigned with him. Members of the House Freedom Caucus, such as Reps. Jim Jordan of Ohio, Mark Meadows of North Carolina, and Louie Gohmert of Texas, also lent their support.

In an interview on the Mark Levin radio show, a friendly setting for Roy, he said he was proud to be allied with those members.

Roy graduated from the University of Virginia and holds a law degree from the University of Texas. He's worked in both the public and private sectors, including as first assistant attorney general under Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, and as a senior adviser and director for state-federal relations to former Gov. Rick Perry, who's now Energy Department secretary.

Roy has also worked as an investment banking analyst for NationsBanc Capital Markets and as vice president for strategy at a conservative think tank, the Texas Public Policy Foundation, where he focused on energy issues and promoting the use of fossil fuels. Currently, he works as general counsel for Brigham Resources, an Austin-based oil and gas company.

Not for Public Distribution

Rep. John Sarbanes (D-Md.)

3rd District, Part of Baltimore; Olney; Annapolis

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

Long an advocate for overhauling campaign-finance laws and strengthening ethical standards, Sarbanes redoubled his efforts in 2017 with the rise of Donald Trump.

"We're fighting back against the lack of accountability that we see in the Trump administration and from special interests," Sarbanes said six months into Trump's presidency



Even before Trump took office in January, Sarbanes was expressing alarm about the New York business mogul's plans for running the executive branch.

"The number of ethical violations and special interest entanglements make your head spin," he said just a few weeks after Trump was elected in November 2016. "It's breathtaking. Is the Oval Office just going to be another revenue center in the Trump business empire?"

Sarbanes heads what House Democrats call their Democracy Reform Task Force, set up just before Trump was inaugurated to push measures to encourage more small-dollar donations to campaigns, to require greater public disclosure of political spending and to make other changes in the election process.

Such legislation has little chance of passing in a Congress controlled by Republicans, but Democrats think it will help their message in upcoming elections.

"By making citizen-owned elections a viable alternative to our current big-money system, we can help congressional candidates spend more time with their constituents and less time with the insider crowd," Sarbanes wrote in an op-ed he wrote with Washington Democrat Derek Kilmer in late 2015 when they introduced a bill they called the Government By the People Act. "Just imagine a candidate standing in your living room and listening to your priorities, because you and your neighbors are the ones with the power."

Meantime, the Democracy Reform Task Force is trying to keep the public focus on Trump's ethical controversies and the investigations into his campaign's possible collusion with Russia.

"This is an-all-hands-on-deck situation that demands immediate action from Congress," Sarbanes said after the first indictments were handed down in the probe led by Special Counsel Robert Mueller.

Sarbanes, who was first elected in 2006, has generally followed his own principles in conducting his campaigns. In 2016, when he handily defeated Republican Mark Plaster and a Green Party candidate, Sarbanes raised nearly \$600,000 without taking any contributions from political action committees. The bulk of his donations came from retirees, lawyers and employees associated with Johns Hopkins University in his district. He spent about \$320,000 on the race.

A year before, in June 2015, Sarbanes opted out of a bid to replace retiring Sen. Barbara A. Mikulski, leaving the door open to fellow Maryland Democratic Rep. Chris Van Hollen, who won the seat in November 2016.

Campaign finance is not Sarbanes' sole focus. He is a forceful proponent of preventive health care and boosting federal spending to combat the nation's shortfall of primary care physicians, a cause born of his career before joining Congress as a lawyer representing health care providers.

He also is a staunch advocate of the Chesapeake Bay and of outdoor learning for children, a testament to the crabbing and beach trips he took as a kid while growing up in his native Baltimore. Sarbanes pursues these interests as a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Sarbanes grew up attending Orioles games at Memorial Stadium, just a few blocks from his childhood home in the comfortable middle-class enclave of Guilford. His father was elected to the state legislature when John was 4 and entered Congress when John was 8. Paul S. Sarbanes represented Maryland in the House and Senate for 36 years, making his mark in financial regulation.

Like his father, whose old House seat he now occupies, Sarbanes attended Princeton University and Harvard Law School. He studied law and politics in Greece on a Fulbright scholarship, and he stays connected with the Greek community. On the wall of his House office is the ship manifest from when his grandfather emigrated from Greece to the United States in 1909.

After graduating law school, Sarbanes returned to Baltimore to clerk for U.S. District Judge J. Frederick Motz before representing hospitals and other medical providers at Venable. He also served for 15 years as a board member for the Public Justice Center, a Baltimore organization providing legal assistance to the poor, and in his school liaison post.

Sarbanes got his shot at the 3rd District House seat in 2006, when Democratic Rep. Benjamin L. Cardin launched his successful bid to succeed the senior Sarbanes in the Senate. Eight candidates contested the primary, but the family name trumped all; Sarbanes appeared alongside his father in ads and used his father's longtime motto of "fairness and opportunity" on his campaign literature.

Rep. Jackie Speier (D-Calif.)

14th District, Most of San Mateo County; part of San Francisco

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

Nearly four decades ago, Speier then a House aide, survived five gunshots at the infamous Peoples Temple cult in Jonestown in Guyana.

That which does not kill us makes us stronger, it is said. Speier survived the Jonestown cult to become one of the toughest members of Congress.

She uses her strength to protect the most vulnerable: people who are sexually assaulted, children exposed to dangerous products, military pilots at risk of being killed by faulty equipment on their own jets, among others.

Speier (SPEAR), was working as an aide to California Democratic Rep. Leo J. Ryan in 1978 during his investigation of Jonestown, when they made an ill-fated trip to the compound. While there, cult members opened fire on their party, and Ryan and several others were killed. Speier pulled through but later had to undergo 10 surgeries, and she still has two bullets in her body. She recalls asking herself a question during her recovery. "I realized that I had a decision to make," she said. "Did I want to be a victim, or did I want to be a survivor?"

The Jonestown nightmare, and other personal travails, gave her what she calls a "sense of urgency" in both life and politics. It shows in her no-nonsense style.

A former colleague from the California Senate told the L.A. Times that Speier "wanted to get things done. It means you ruffle feathers inevitably."

President Donald Trump has frequently been the target of the pointed Speier rhetoric. She has raised questions about his mental health and charged him with nepotism. She has squared off with Republican colleagues on the Intelligence Committee, which is investigating connections between the Trump campaign and Russia.

In 1979, she moved on from the Jonestown incident and ran in a crowded special election to succeed Ryan, finishing fourth. Then, the following year, she won a county government election and later was elected to California's legislature before ultimately being elected to the House in 2008.

When she served in the California legislature, she was known for her work to protect consumers. Years later, in 2010, she became an early supporter of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. She has also introduced bills to help consumers protect their online data.

Speier has authored legislation in the House to make liquid detergent packets less appealing to children as well as a proposal to bar companies from selling and marketing e-cigarettes to children.

Speier is a noted fighter for the rights of women.

She wants to eliminate the time limit for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, which would constitutionally prohibit discrimination based on sex. She advocates for reproductive rights, and defended women's health care on the 114th Congress' anti-abortion select committee.

Early in 2011, she made a dramatic announcement during a House floor debate on funding for Planned Parenthood. She said she had undergone a second-trimester abortion procedure nearly two decades earlier, as the baby was not going to survive, and argued for the necessity of these decisions being made solely by a woman and her doctor.

She has also fought for equal pay, for more women-owned small businesses in government contracting, and against nonconsensual pornography, often called "revenge porn."

One of Speier's hallmark missions in Congress has been fighting sexual assault, particularly in the military. Historically, only a relatively small percentage of rape and sexual assaults in the armed forces has been reported. Even fewer perpetrators are court-martialed. And seeking justice sometimes adds insult to injury for victims, many of whom have been drummed out of the service to be silenced.



Speier started her examination of the military justice system as a member of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee in the 112th Congress (2011-12), and she expanded her campaign when she was added to the Armed Services Committee in 2012.

Speier--along with Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., and others--wants to remove sexual assault cases from the normal chain of command to an independent and mostly civilian entity--the only way, she maintains, to ensure fair treatment for victims.

"This epidemic will not be solved by incremental reforms," she said in a statement in 2014.

Speier has not succeeded in enacting the legislation. But she has secured the Armed Services panel's backing of proposals to improve the military justice system's provisions that apply to victims of sexual trauma, preserve and make available records from military courts-martial and to eliminate the military sex offender tracking loophole.

Speier has branched out to work on campus sexual assaults, and she also has suggested mandatory sexual harassment training for all congressional offices.

When she was ranking member of the Armed Services Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Speier made fiscal oversight a priority.

"There is a blank-check mentality in that committee that is shocking to me," she said at the time. "The committee shouldn't be a subsidiary of the defense contractors."

And in her current role as top Democrat on the Military Personnel Subcommittee, she has continued to fight against waste, fraud and abuse and to advocate for the needs of military personnel.

The California Democrat contends that taxpayers have been "ripped off" by contractors overcharging for spare parts, and she highlighted her concerns with game-show-inspired presentations - dubbed "The Price is Wrong" - on the House floor in the 113th Congress (2013-14).

Speier was the only member of House Armed Services to publicly question Pentagon officials in 2015 about reports that the F-35 fighter jet's ejection seats had flaws that could cause some pilots to break their necks if they had to eject.

Speier has been outspoken on matters of war and peace. She urged a quicker end to U.S. involvement in Afghanistan. She also opposed the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, using one of her first speeches on the House floor in 2008 to criticize President George W. Bush's war strategy. Republicans booed her.

Speier, who was appointed to the House Select Intelligence Committee in the 114th Congress (2015-16), has pledged to work on the "21st century threat" of cybersecurity. After a large attack and release of personal customer data from health insurance provider Anthem's servers, Speier stated, "How many more breaches will we endure before we admit that the private sector cannot solve this problem itself?"

Speier is a San Francisco native whose working-class parents moved south to San Mateo County when she was a child. She took the name Jackie for her Catholic confirmation in honor of former first lady Jacqueline Kennedy. She met Ryan when she was 16, working as a volunteer in his 1966 re-election campaign for the state Assembly. She went on to study at the University of California at Davis. During her freshman year, Ryan offered her an academic internship. That led to a job in his office, and Ryan later added her to his congressional staff.

After the events of Jonestown, Speier spent six years in county government, a decade in the Assembly and eight years in the state Senate. In 2006, she lost a hotly contested primary for lieutenant governor. But in 2008, she easily won a special congressional election to succeed Democratic Rep. Tom Lantos, who had died of esophageal cancer. Speier flirted with a run for state attorney general in 2010, and has not run for statewide office since, although she easily won reelection in 2014 by more than 50 points.

Jonestown was not Speier's only brush with tragedy. She and her first husband, physician Steve Sierra, adopted a baby -- but a short while later, the birth mother changed her mind. When Speier was pregnant with her second child, Sierra was killed by a drunken driver -- she has since remarried. With two co-authors, she drew on her life experiences to write a book in 2007, "This Is Not the Life I Ordered: 50 Ways to Keep Your Head Above Water When Life Keeps Dragging You Down."

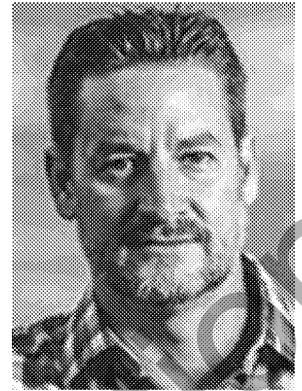
Rep. Greg Steube (R-Fla.)

17th District, South central -- Port Charlotte, Sebring

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

Steube hopes his background as a lawyer, a veteran, and a state senator who chaired the Florida Senate's Judiciary Committee and served as an appropriator in both state chambers will help him win a plum committee assignment on either Ways and Means or Appropriations.



He's open to other possibilities, though. "With my military background, obviously Foreign Affairs, Intelligence, anything having to do with national security" would be attractive, he added. As would the Agriculture Committee, since Florida's 17th is the No. 1 citrus-producing district in the entire nation. Plus, Steube's college degree is in animal science from the University of Florida.

In an August debate prior to the three-way Republican primary, which he won handily with 62 percent of the vote, Steube made clear that if elected he would be a faithful supporter of President Trump.

"I want to go to Washington, D.C. to help Trump pass his agenda," Steube said. "I want to fight with President Trump like I fought at the state level to help him pass his illegal immigration plan, to help him pass tax cuts, to make the tax cuts we just passed permanent and continue to work on cutting regulations in businesses."

Invoking the president's name made particularly good sense in a district that Trump won by 27 percentage points in 2016. The president's popularity in southwest Florida is underscored by how much better he did there than Mitt Romney, the GOP's presidential nominee in 2012, who won the district by a thinner, 16-percentage-point margin.

Steube says he hopes to be an active bill writer in his first year in Congress, as he was in the Florida legislature. He won passage of four bills during his rookie season in the Florida House and filed 70 bills during his first year in Florida's Senate in 2017 and another 64 in 2018.

Steube boasts of being hyperactive on the gun rights front in a state where the Second Amendment has been controversial in the wake of a deadly school shooting in Parkland in February 2018 and the 2012 shooting of Trayvon Martin, a 17-year-old African American who was unarmed, by a neighborhood watch coordinator, George Zimmerman. A Florida jury later acquitted Zimmerman of murder charges.

"Just about every pro-Second Amendment" piece of legislation passed in Florida this decade had his name on it, Steube says.

Filing new gun laws was one of the reasons Steube got such high ratings from the American Conservative Union, which gave him a 93 percent rating in its latest analysis and a lifetime rating of 94 percent.

Among the bills Steube would like to sponsor is a "national concealed carry" law so that a gun owner with a permit to carry a concealed firearm doesn't have to worry about whether there is reciprocity between their state and a state they're traveling to.

Steube started his political career in southwest Florida with a good deal of name recognition and attained even more as he climbed the political ladder.

After returning from the Gulf War, where he served as a U.S. Army captain, Steube ran for a Florida House seat in 2010 where the Steube name is well known. The district consists mainly of Manatee County, which

encompasses Bradenton on the state's Gulf Coast and surroundings. Steube's father, Brad, was county sheriff at the time and in Florida, county sheriffs are often the most well-known county officials.

The younger Steube served six years in the Florida House and then won the state Senate seat that included Sarasota County – Manatee's neighbor to the south – and the populous eastern portion of Charlotte County further to the south.

Two years later, after Rep. Tom Rooney announced he would not run for a sixth term, Steube announced he would seek the open seat. While Florida's 17th Congressional District is huge, covering 6,300 square miles and all or parts of nine counties, Steube's coastal state Senate district contained more than half of the population of the district.

Winning the GOP primary in this district was considered the biggest hurdle, but the general election race received a shock when the Democratic candidate, April Freeman, died of a heart attack Sept. 24. Per Florida law, the Democratic county chairmen convened and picked a new candidate to take Freeman's place, selecting Allen Ellison, the founder of a not-for-profit community development group.

Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-Mich.)

13th District, Part of Detroit and most of Dearborn Heights

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

Being a trailblazer isn't new to Tlaib. She will be one of the first two Muslim women in the House, but she was already the first Muslim woman to serve in the Michigan legislature.

She says breaking barriers is especially significant today.

"For me, what's really powerful is that it happened now," she says. "The fact that it happened at this moment in our country, where it's been pretty dark and stormy, this is a wonderful ray of light."

In a nod to her Palestinian roots, she plans to be sworn into Congress in her mom's thobe -- a traditional dress -- and put her hand on Thomas Jefferson's Quran.

A member of the Democratic Socialists of America, her agenda hews to the very progressive.

She wants to sit on the Appropriations Committee to make sure federal spending is directed to programs that help working families.

While she supports her party on many issues, she says she won't be a rubber stamp for leadership. She said she would "probably not" vote for Nancy Pelosi for speaker if the Democrats win the majority.

Tlaib talks about the political courage of her predecessor, John Conyers Jr., as something to emulate, citing his opposition to both the 2001 Patriot Act and the Iraq War when it was unpopular to do so.

"He set the tone in this district where I can stand up against those kinds of injustices and not just constantly follow what the majority is doing," she says.

She wants to bolster civil rights through legislation that she calls the "Justice for All Civil Rights Act" that would look at societal inequities more broadly than past civil rights laws have done.

Tlaib says laws of the 1960s, aimed at assuring voting rights and preventing discrimination in public accommodations, have been "diluted to the point now that you have to show intent for discrimination instead of just for impact. I want to go back to the core reason of the law."

She says her bill would alter how car insurance companies sell insurance and how banks provide home loans.

Tlaib wants to abolish the Immigration and Customs Enforcement division of the Homeland Security Department. It enforces immigration laws and played a role in separating immigrant children from their families during a 2018 Trump administration crackdown at the border.

She also favors a path to citizenship for all undocumented immigrants and eliminating detention centers where immigrants are held pending deportation proceedings.

She supports more social services spending -- she wants to move to a single-payer, government-run health care system, for instance -- and would pay for it by taking a fine-tooth comb to Defense contracts. She told the liberal magazine In These Times that the Pentagon is "a cesspool for corporations to make money."

She is also interested in foreign policy, particularly in the Middle East.



Tlaib said U.S. foreign aid, especially to Israel, “should be used as leverage to promote peace, promote equality and justice for all.” In an interview with Great Britain's Channel 4 News, she accused Israel of discrimination against Palestinians.

The struggle for Palestinian rights is personal to her.

“My social justice and passion for human rights was birthed in Palestine. My grandfather was shot 11 times — and he survived,” she told In These Times.

For Tlaib, the decision to run came from the belief “that every single person and child deserves to live in a just, equitable society.”

She noted that the current generation doesn't have the civil rights and social justice figures of the stature of Georgia Democratic Rep. John Lewis and Conyers. She says her role model and mentor is Mary Turner, a well-known Detroit social worker.

Tlaib has a flair for the theatrical.

In 2012, the Detroit public school system planned to shut the high school she attended. She lay down in front of the school to stop traffic and raise awareness of the issue; the school closed anyway.

She gained national attention after disrupting a 2016 Detroit Economic Club speech by then-candidate Donald Trump, asking him “to read the U.S. Constitution” and was eventually taken out of the meeting.

The oldest of 14 children born to Palestinian immigrant parents, she spent her younger years taking care of siblings and translating for her mother.

After earning a law degree, she worked at a national consortium of independent Arab-American community organizations and was a policy analyst for a Democratic member of the Michigan House. She later won a state House seat and spent much of her time in the legislature castigating corporations for what she perceived as injustices in her community.

Her district, one of two majority-minority seats in Michigan, takes in nearly half of Detroit, including many impoverished sections, as well as working-class suburbs, including part of Dearborn Heights, which includes a sizeable Arab-American population.

Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.)

23rd District, Southeast -- Hollywood, Plantation, Miami suburbs

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

Wasserman Schultz keeps landing in the headlines, but for reasons that rarely relate to advocating for or helping pass legislation.

Despite semi-frequent negative publicity, however, she remains a chief deputy whip for her party's House caucus. And that means she has a role to play when her leaders need to wrangle votes to help GOP leaders clear must-pass legislation on issues like raising the debt ceiling and averting government shutdowns.

The Florida Democrat's latest move that raised eyebrows came when she opted to keep an information technology worker on her payroll despite the fact he was banned from the House network and fired by another member of Congress.

Wasserman Schultz eventually fired Awan after he was arrested on bank fraud charges as he was attempting to leave the country.

When the initial investigation had been reviewed with her, Wasserman Schultz told the Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel in early August, "I was presented with no evidence of anything that they were being investigated for. And so that, in me, gave me great concern that his due process rights were being violated. That there were racial and ethnic profiling concerns that I had."

Months before she had to deal with that scandal, her five and a half year tenure as the chairwoman of the Democratic National Committee ended in an abrupt and dramatic fashion on the eve of the 2016 Democratic National Convention.

The Florida congresswoman announced that she would bow out as DNC chairwoman at the end of the convention. Her announcement came hours after Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, Hillary Clinton's main rival for the party's presidential nomination, called on her to resign.

After facing cheers from her allies and boos from Sanders fans at a Florida delegation event on the first day of the convention, Wasserman Schultz decided not to gavel in that afternoon's opening session of the convention, the traditional role of the party chairwoman.

The spark that ignited the furor came in the form of some 20,000 emails from DNC staffers, obtained by hackers and made public by the group Wikileaks. Some of the e-mails showed that Wasserman Schultz's subordinates were working to undermine the Sanders presidential campaign.

Sanders and his allies had argued for months that the DNC was favoring Clinton, by, for example, limiting the number of debates in the primary season to six, compared to 25 in 2008.

In her announcement that she would quit as DNC head, Wasserman Schultz pointed to some of her accomplishments, such as helping the party pay off its 2012 election debt and increasing the amount of money the DNC sent to state Democratic parties.

Meanwhile, Wasserman Schultz had a political challenge in her Florida district. In the Aug. 30 primary, she was contending with a Sanders-backed challenger, law professor Tim Canova, who had raised more money in the second quarter of 2016 than Wasserman Schultz. But her campaign still had a \$600,000 advantage in cash on hand.

Even before the uproar at the Democratic convention, Wasserman Schultz broke with the progressive forces in her party in 2015 on the issue of giving fast-track Trade Promotion Authority to President Barack Obama.

On the first House TPA vote, after House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi had announced her opposition to the measure on the House floor, Wasserman Schultz was one of the 28 House Democrats to support Obama.

"I trust this president, with whom I share so many of the same values and priorities, to be the one setting the standards for this six-year authorization of TPA," she said.

She said she supported the trade bill because it would ensure that enhanced labor standards, protection of human rights and protection of the environment would be part of trade agreements such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership.



She also voted for free-trade pacts with Panama, South Korea and Colombia in 2011.

Wasserman Schultz once said that she "never really wanted to do anything other than be a member of a legislative body." After 12 years in the Florida Legislature, she won election to the U.S. House at age 38.

Democrats quickly appreciated her talents as a fundraiser and campaign operative, as well as her ability to connect with Jewish and women voters. She took on several assignments at the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, and in her second term she became a chief deputy whip.

She hoped to lead the DCCC in the 112th Congress (2011-12), but the job went to Steve Israel of New York. She eventually became the first sitting House member to hold the job since Tennessee's Cordell Hull in 1924.

Wasserman Schultz closely follows women's issues and in 2014 joined three other Democratic lawmakers - Nita M. Lowey of New York, Chellie Pingree of Maine and Louise M. Slaughter of New York - to urge the Food and Drug Administration to allow the marketing of a drug for female sexual dysfunction. A Food and Drug Administration advisory panel gave its OK to such a treatment in 2015.

Wasserman Schultz's DNC duties have kept her from some day-to-day legislating, but she returned to the Appropriations Committee in 2013 and is the top Democrat on its Legislative Branch subcommittee. She was its chairwoman from 2007 through 2010. She also landed a seat on the Budget Committee, and showed she will mix it up with Trump administration officials.

In May 2017, she told Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney she saw President Donald Trump's fiscal 2018 federal spending request as the "taxpayer shaft budget" because "that's really what you're doing to millions and millions of people who simply are trying to make sure that they can keep their head above water and live a decent lifestyle."

She was once a member of the Judiciary Committee, and she still calls for stricter controls on gun ownership. Her best friend from Congress is Arizona Democrat Gabrielle Giffords, who was shot in the head by a mentally unstable man in Tucson in January 2011. Wasserman Schultz in 2012 read Giffords' resignation letter on the House floor.

Wasserman Schultz, who also sits on the State-Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee, has many Jewish constituents and favors robust support for Israel. She is fairly hawkish, voting for some anti-terrorism and defense policy measures. In June 2014 she supported Obama's authority to send Special Forces to Iraq.

Her rise in politics has coincided with the growth of her family. Wasserman Schultz is married to a banker, Steve Schultz, and they have three school-age children, including a set of twins. Her family lives in Florida. She told The Washington Post in March 2014 that, in an effort to woo moms to run for Congress, she has introduced their husbands to Schultz to discuss what it's like at home when the House is in session.

Like many Floridians, Wasserman Schultz is a transplanted New Yorker. She grew up on the south shore of Long Island. Her father was the chief financial officer for a girls' clothing company, Roanna Togs; her mother was a horticulturist. She attended the University of Florida, her father's alma mater, earning degrees in political science.

She stepped into politics as an aide to Florida state Rep. Peter Deutsch, a Democrat. When Deutsch ran successfully for Congress, she decided to seek his old state House seat. Local party bosses dismissed her, but she prevailed in a six-way primary and became, at 26, the youngest woman to serve in the Florida House. Eight years later she was elected to the state Senate. After four years there, she won Deutsch's U.S. House seat, taking more than 70 percent of the vote in the heavily Democratic district. (Deutsch waged an unsuccessful Senate campaign.) Before getting elected to the House, she donated \$100,000 from her campaign to help other candidates in 2004, exceeding amounts given by many senior House Democrats.

Wasserman Schultz announced in March 2009 that she had successfully battled breast cancer. That same year, she co-founded a charity softball game featuring a team of female members of Congress; the game raises money for a breast cancer nonprofit. It's also another outlet for her competitiveness. Wasserman Schultz broke her leg sliding into second base in the inaugural game and tore her hamstring running the bases in 2014.

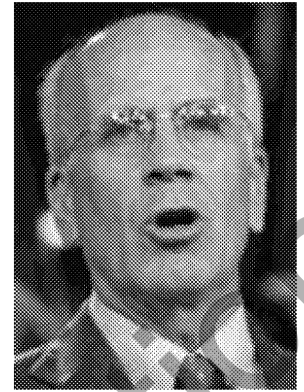
Rep. Peter Welch (D-Vt.)

At Large, Vermont -- At Large

Member basics

Politics in America Profile

Welch, a solid liberal, is well situated to aid his party in battles with the Trump administration. He's a member of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee, where he works closely with Elijah Cummings of Maryland, the panel's ranking Democrat, on issues around drug costs. With his seat on the Energy and Commerce Committee, Welch can seek to defend environmental regulations and efforts to support the development of clean energy.



While President Donald Trump and his fellow Republicans see environmental regulations as an obstacle to economic growth, Welch says that a strong drive to curb pollution will actually benefit the nation's workers. In a March floor speech, Welch noted estimates that clean energy enterprises may employ about 24 million people in 2030, up from 8.1 million now.

"This planet is melting. We have had the worst wild weather in centuries; the three hottest years on record," Welch said on the House floor in March. "President Trump believes we either have jobs or a clean environment. He has it exactly wrong. We have both or we have neither. A confident nation faces its problems. It doesn't deny them."

Welch is interested in eventually tackling the biggest issues before Congress. His strategy for getting to that point is tackling smaller ones first, and using those efforts to build out capacity for bipartisan collaboration. He once said his favorite person to work with is "whoever I can get to say yes."

It's not lip service. Welch is a chief deputy whip for the House Democrats and a perennially useful ally of his party's leadership team. He's also an aggressive suitor of Republicans, working enthusiastically on bills where their political views coincide. His signature issue is the promotion of energy efficiency, but he's active on a wide range of subjects: "I find that any time I can be helpful to anybody else, I don't know how, I don't know when, but in some way that's gonna be helpful to Vermont."

Welch has found GOP allies in the 115th Congress on health care issues, and even had a friendly chat in March 2017 with the president on the subject of drug pricing. At that White House meeting, Welch handed Trump a Burlington Free Press story on a Vermont family who had seen the annual cost for a corticosteroid to treat their son's muscular dystrophy jump to \$89,000 from \$500. Welch and Cummings specifically sought the president's backing for their bid to leverage the size of Medicare and have the giant federal health program deal directly with drugmakers on costs for the Part D pharmacy program. Current law leaves these negotiations to insurers who manage this Medicare drug benefit.

"It simply makes no sense for Medicare to buy wholesale and pay retail prices," Welch said after the March meeting. "As a businessman, President Trump understands that."

Yet, alliances built by reaching across the aisle to fellow House members may prove a more fruitful path for changing federal policy. Welch works with the bipartisan Problem Solvers Caucus, which has been pressing for both parties to work together on major issues such as health care costs and a tax overhaul.

After partisan GOP efforts to undo much of the 2010 health law foundered in both chambers in the early months of the Trump administration, the Problem Solvers Caucus in July put forward a set of ideas for reining in the cost of insurance plans sold through government exchanges. Democrats, according to Welch, have to concede

that there are parts of the 2010 law that haven't worked well, and then find GOP partners willing to overhaul, and not scrap, this major legislation.

"It's the first bipartisan commitment on a concrete plan to fix a component of the Affordable Care Act," Welch told Vermont Public Radio. "It's the first time we haven't been arguing about repealing versus improving, and that's promising."

Rep. Tom Reed, the New York Republican who is co-chair of the Problem Solvers Caucus, also is Welch's partner on a bill meant to help small and medium-sized American manufacturers adopt improved technologies.

"Manufacturing technology is changing rapidly," said Welch. "It's important that smaller manufacturers have the same opportunity as their larger competitors to utilize the latest smart technology."

With Rep. John Katko, another New York Republican, Welch introduced a bill meant to simplify the process of applying for and repaying federal student loans.

"Graduates should be focused on putting their degree to work and securing a job that will allow them to enter that middle class, rather than getting caught up in the maze of student loan repayment process," Welch said.

Welch is dogged in defending the dairy industry, a dominant force in his state. In 2016, he requested that the Food and Drug Administration enforce a definition of "milk" as being a beverage that comes from cows, and thus require drinks made from other substances, such as nuts, rebrand themselves. So-called almond milk has become a popular beverage in recent years.

"You have these other products that are basically free-riding on the advertising about milk and its specific, positive qualities," Welch told USA Today in a 2016 telephone interview.

Welch is a transplant to the state he represents - he grew up in Springfield, Massachusetts, the third of six children. His father was a dentist, and his mother was a homemaker. He attended Cathedral Catholic High School, where he helped his team win the 1964 and 1965 city championships in basketball - a big deal in the city where the game was invented.

He enrolled at the nearby College of the Holy Cross but left in his junior year for a community organizing project in Chicago. He eventually returned to wrap up a history degree, and then went back to Illinois to fight discriminatory housing policies. After earning a law degree at the University of California at Berkeley in 1973, Welch spent six months backpacking the Pan-American Highway down to Santiago, Chile.

Back in the states, he went to work as a public defender in White River Junction, Vt. He sharpened his legislative skills in the Vermont Senate; Welch served in that chamber for most of the 1980s and returned there in the years leading up to his 2006 election to the House. He won the 2016 election with 90 percent of the vote.